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THROUGH MAN TO GOD

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BY

GEORGE A. GORDON

MINISTER OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH, BOSTON

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SECOND IMPRESSION

TO

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN TEMPLE MAINE WHERE I BEGAN MY MINISTRY; TO THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN GREENWICH CONNECTICUT WHERE MY MINISTRY WAS CONTINUED; AND TO THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH IN BOSTON WHERE FOR NEARLY THREE AND TWENTY YEARS I HAVE SERVED SUPPORTED BY THE DEVOTION OF A GREAT PARISH I DEDICATE THESE SERMONS IN HONOR AND LOVE

PREFACE

TOWARD the close of his life Tennyson said to a friend, "My chief desire is to have a new vision of God." In this desire the great poet is the prophet of all serious men. What is final? What is sovereign? Who is God? Up into these questions all other human questions are at length gathered. Man's destiny is in the keeping of man's Maker, whether that Maker be mud or mind, cosmic force or Eternal Spirit.

The ancient question ran, "When shall I come and appear before God?" To-day we modify that question and ask, "How shall we appear before God?" Is the character of the Eternal accessible to man? And if so, how? Along what path may we approach that character? Where shall we look for the greater witness?

There are, finally, but two ways of approach to the character of the Infinite, — cosmic nature and man. It is true that these exist together in a kind of sacramental union. It may seem that in any attempt to regard them as opposites, there is a violation of the great law, what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Still, they stand to each other as higher and lower, and they speak a different word concerning the Mystery that is within them and behind them.

Some years ago John Fiske published an interesting book under the title "Through Nature to God." Many men whom I honor found light in that book. When I read it, I felt that my convictions were fundamentally opposed, not so much to the isolated ideas of the book, as to the plan expressed in its title. The title of my book originated in this fundamental opposition to Mr. Fiske's plan. "Through Man to God" is the expression that sums up my conception of the heart and soul of Christianity. Christianity is the interpretation of the Eternal, not through nature, but through human nature, not through the lower expressions of the creative power, but through man, the highest expression. The creation at its best gives us the Creator at his best; the highest man is the supreme revelation of God.

The sermons in this volume have their unity here. They are variations upon this one persistent theme. The incarnation of God in Jesus the perfect man, in all men as moral beings, in all good men as the life of their life, is the fundamental idea in my philosophy of existence. In this volume that idea is presented in the free-

dom of discourse and in relation to the human needs which it is fitted to meet.

The justification for the publication of a volume of sermons is in the ideas that they contain, the vitality with which these ideas are pervaded, and the literary conscience with which they are expressed. If in this sentence I have not vindicated the appearance of the present volume, I have at least indicated my ideal, and I have further written the law in accordance with which my book may be condemned.

GEORGE A. GORDON.

OLD SOUTH PARSONAGE, BOSTON, MASS.
May 6, 1906.

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THROUGH MAN TO GOD

I

GOD AND HOPE

"Having no hope and without God in the world."
Ephesians ii, 12.

THE apostle finds among the facts of existence what he calls the hopeless life. He traces this hopelessness to what he considers its source and cause. Hopeless men are Godless men. And this atheism is not the mere intellectual denial of the Divine existence; it is also, and far more, the moral, the practical denial. The apostle is thinking of a mind with no clear and serious belief in the Eternal goodness, of a will with no high purpose of service, of a heart outside the joyous visitations and sympathies that are the life of faith. His explanation of this haggard existence is that it is without the conscious presence of the living God, and therefore without hope. For him, God and hope are bound together as cause and effect. He would as soon expect daylight without the sun as to find hope in man without God.

Great persistent emotions have their sustain-

ing origin in great persistent ideas. Men seek because they believe that they shall find, they knock because they believe that it shall be opened unto them. Certain things belong together in the way of cause and effect, and where this connection is not obvious, we may still see that one without the other is incomplete. We can think of a pedestal without a statue and of a statue without a pedestal; but neither is complete without the other. The statue is useless without the pedestal; the pedestal is vain without the statue. The complete work of art demands the presence of both. It is so with hope and God. Hope may exist without belief in God, or the sense of his reality, but it is a vain hope. Belief in God may exist without hope, but this is abnormal. Where there is the consciousness of God, there is the ground of hope, valid, reasonable hope. Where there is no consciousness of God, there is no ground of hope. When we are clear, we conclude that life with God is life with hope, that life without God is life without hope.

1. Without God there is no hope of understanding nature. It is indeed true that through the courses of the cosmos there is no revelation of the moral being of the Infinite. Moral life alone can reveal moral life; soul alone can speak for soul. But this is not the whole case. Con-

science and love are not the whole of God. God is power, thought, beauty, the terrestrial and cosmic disposition that on the whole favors life in this world.

If there is anything clear and certain, it is the existence of power out and beyond ourselves. In every breath, in every breeze, in every gale, in all the milder and in all the fiercer attacks made upon our life, we are conscious of the existence of power other than our own. Any other confession is confusion. Any other conclusion is a contradiction of the original and final decision of the sound mind. Native force of mind is a great thing, and here the farmer is not infrequently a better authority than the naturalist. The sense of what exists is the beginning of wisdom; it is like the lamp in the dark room.

Again, the cosmos looks as if it were the expression of thought. What a Greek thinker long ago discovered in nature would seem to be there. There seems to be among the individual things that we know an aspiration after the complete life. In the flower, in the tree, in the bird, in the beast of the field and the fish of the sea, there seems to be the persistent struggle upward toward completeness. All individuals, all groups of individuals, seem to be pursuing ends, and these ends seem to be embedded in the order and structure of their being. There

may be countless failures; there may be few successes. Still, this struggle toward the attainment of ideal ends is impressive. Evolution when it is sane is little more than a new and mightier edition of Aristotle's doctrine of ends. All that we see, all that we know, is in movement toward the complete existence; and cosmic ends without cosmic intelligence is cosmic nonsense.

There is beauty in the world. What shall we make of it? It has been said in an interesting book that beauty is pleasure objectified. Is that enough? Is that the full and adequate account of a beautiful face or a glorious sunset? Does the statement that beauty is altogether a thing of the pleased and generous mind, that it is the shadow upon the world cast by the rapt soul, account for Milton's sorrow over the loss of his sight?

> "Seasons return, but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
> But clouds instead and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of nature's works to me expunged and rased,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

The beauty is in the perceiving mind and in the

feeling heart. The inspiration of it is out and beyond, in the light of setting suns. The cosmos bears the character of an inspirer of beauty; and when our receptivities are dull, or closed, or taken away, the vision and the passion of beauty revisit us no more.

There is the cosmic disposition favorable to life on the earth. One can imagine a storm in which no ship could live, a hurricane which no human habitation could survive, a degree of heat or of cold destructive of every living thing, a blast from some cave of the Furies that would spread death everywhere. There is restraint upon cosmic hostility to life; otherwise life would cease. On the other hand, there is cosmic favor, sympathy, benignity. What shall we do with this chastened cosmic hostility and this high sympathy? Natural selection is the phrase that leaps for utterance. Nature has bred life from the life best adapted to her strange environments till she has arrived at races largely harmonious with her stern caprices. Her wily offspring know how to dodge her blows and feed upon her bounties. It is strange that a metaphor should mislead the world. Man the breeder and improver of life we know as a person of superior mind and skill, but nature the breeder and improver of life we know as without mind, working in the dark, without aim, by sheer luck arriving

at the stupendous result of life adapted more and more to its environment. Of all the poor sophisms that have ever passed for reason, this is one of the meanest; of all the instances where scientific bread was demanded and a common vulgar stone given, this is the supreme example. If in all our adjustments and improvements we do nothing more than act in sympathy with the cosmic process, then why is our struggle full of mind and that process mindless? Nothing can disturb the sound mind in its sense of the power, the thought, the beauty, and the order of favor to life in the cosmos. To say that the thoughts and feelings of the individual man are the sole realities, is the same as saying that the prisoner of Chillon in his dungeon is as high in privilege as Byron and Shelley on the wondrous lake or among the great mountains. The cosmos is not simply vision; it is at least the vision of power, thought, beauty, and favor. If we cannot say that the power is cosmic will, that the thought is cosmic intellect, that the beauty is cosmic soul, that the order favorable to life is cosmic sympathy, if we cannot describe as Spirit the wondrous whole that so answers to our spirit, we must be dumb. We have then a cosmos that is a sphinx, — nameless, inscrutable, eternal mystery.

2. Without God there is no hope of under-

standing the goodness in man, and in man's history. Man is not his own maker. It is true that character is an achievement. Still, certain powers and aptitudes for this achievement are born with the soul. The capacity for discerning truth from falsehood, right from wrong, humanity from inhumanity, comes with us into the world. The capacity for love in all its high forms is a native capacity. There is the lover's love, the parent's love, the child's love, the patriot's love, the philanthropist's love, the saint's love. The capacity that in certain great instances bursts into this world of bloom and fruitfulness is native to man. So, too, the capacity to serve. The heavenly vision is first discriminated from the vision of hell, then follows the love of the eternal solemnity, then comes the life of ardent and happy service. Man is born with a profusion of exalted aptitudes. He comes to the moral task of life as the sun comes to its daily duty. It comes with a fiery heart, with a radiant nature, with a luminous and illuminating being. It has but to rise and shine, to lift itself above the horizon and then to let itself go, to appear and to sow the earth with its God-begotten beams. This is the life of the normal man. His nature is stored with aptitudes for his vocation. He has a soul with eyes, a heart with a thousand splendors in it, a will capable of wondrous service and

endless loyalty. Unbind him, set him free, let his capacities out, let his powers go, and his moral achievement is an inevitable achievement. When this does not take place, ignorance and perversity contradict and baffle the clear intention of our being.

All these things we have inherited. True, but that only moves the mystery out of the present into the past. A man does not explain the production of his wealth by the remark that it came to him by inheritance. Wealth is a human creation. It implies in its existence somewhere, labor and sorrow and gladness. The thousand high capacities of the soul are not explained by the fact of descent. These capacities are creations; they are an accumulation of creations through the action and reaction of human life in the order of the world, and in this action and reaction of our human life, under the order of the world, there moves the originating spirit of God. The river is not explained by its course. Its volume at the end is not accounted for by the remark that it has come a thousand miles. It is not explained by the number and the size of its tributaries, nor by the country which it drains, nor by the fountains from which it first issues. The elements, the forces, the laws, and the spirit of the whole world are needed to account for that great,

beautiful, triumphant river. So it is with man. Nothing can account for him but the spirit of the whole, the soul of the universe, the best at the centre of the Infinite, the heart of the Eternal.

There is the goodness of the individual person. In this person pursuing some great ideal, many of these exalted aptitudes are in process of realization. The process of realization is serious, strenuous, sometimes tremendous. Still, it is a victorious process. In it the great souls advance "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." And the profoundest note in this glorious tumult of triumphant manhood is the confession of help out of the unseen, of the grace of the Infinite, of the Strength that perfects itself in human weakness. The history of a great soul is an absolute enigma in a Godless universe.

There is the family life of man, with its sanctities and felicities. Here will is much, but nature is more; and at times nature seems the mightier witness of God. The efficient will conforming an outward environment to its own great purpose may have the aspect of self-sufficiency. From

the outside and for those who do not search its depths, the efficient will may seem the negation of God. The flight of the bird is accounted for by its own strong wings. But in the rush, the surprise, the persistence, the sovereignty, and the sweetness of domestic instincts we see a will other than our own. The home once established, children born, here to be cared for and loved, here to be defended and led up to the threshold of manhood and womanhood, the human heart becomes master. The economic activity and worth of man, the political genius and service of man, the religious vision and passion of man, come out of the heart of our human homes. The goodness here is the best that we know; it is our own, and again it is not our own. The heart of a great workman in any vocation, the heart of a patriot like Lincoln, of a father like Luther, of a mother like Monica, is more than an achievement made possible by family life. Without the grace of the Eternal, it is an absolute mystery. Without God, there is no hope of understanding this supreme blossom and excellence of our humanity. The best education in faith is to revere the hallowed family of the world, and to endeavor to perpetuate this happiness. The true human home, in its possessions, love, service, and hope, speaks for itself. Here the heart of honor seems to utter like an æolian harp the Eternal honor: —

"Speaks not of self that mystic tone,
But of the over-gods alone.
It trembles to the cosmic breath
And as it heareth so it saith."

Here, too, the high souls of the race speak. The final refutation of the universe of Buddha is Buddha himself. That great, pure, compassionate, victorious soul is the negation of the unthinking, unfeeling, and impotent Infinite. Such a soul lights the universe to its heart, and shows there power and grace equal to the production of a spirit thus firm and high. This is the great service of the high souls of our race. They are not self-made. They are not originations in the teeth of fate, in protest against the character of the universe. They are one and all the work of the Eternal Spirit, one and all apostles of the Infinite mystery, one and all witnesses of the heart of honor and fire at the core of being, one and all revelations of the moral life of God. Jesus Christ is the issue of the sympathetic soul of the universe. He drew his being from the heart of the Eternal Being. He is the apostle and high priest of our confession. The universe consented to his existence, it was able to give him his existence, it must be as good as its best issue.

3. Without God, there is no hope of deliverance from man's great enemies. It sometimes

seems to be true that man is a self-deliverer. This power of self-deliverance is the best gift that the universe has bestowed upon him. He seems to be a self-deliverer from ignorance, economic waste and wrong, physical dishonor and pain, vice and crime, and from all uncleanness and outrage. It sometimes appears as if the prospect of self-deliverance for man were bright and alluring.

But how is this deliverance to be wrought? By insight into the laws governing our being and by obedience to them. By the vision of the path of life and by walking therein. Self-deliverance is thus through the power of something other and greater than man. It is through the vision of law and obedience to law; it is through the grace that law breathes into the beholding and serving soul.

This reverses our notion of self-deliverance. After all, we are not our own saviours. We cross the deep with our ships. The sea becomes the great field for the carrying power of a productive race. We triumph on the sea, as elsewhere, by our obedience. Our triumph comes through our knowledge of nature's power, our invocation of nature's help, our willingness to allow nature to fight for us. We achieve by laying hold of power other than our own and infinitely greater.

This is the case when we come to the sphere of character. There is man's sin. No soul has ever torn itself from the meshes of error and wrong without the sense of help from God. No such soul would dare face the task of bringing in a new moral habit to replace the old habit of sin and shame without the promise and prospect of Divine help. Moral reconstitution is the task of multitudes. It is a task that has two aspects. It is an achievement and it is a rescue. The power of rescue is out of the Infinite. Indeed, those who stand in this tremendous process seem hardly to know what we mean by vagueness and uncertainty about God. He is the new thought in the intellect, the new love in the heart, the new tide of strength in the will, the new reservoir of power behind all the lines of supply coming into their lives. He is the breath of their being, the soul of their soul. In the awakened, forgiven, emancipated, victorious soul, God is an ever-present reality. In this direction and current of personal life God lives, in this tidal movement upon noble ends God moves. Those mighty emancipations from sin, such as we find in Paul, Augustine, Luther, and a multitude of others less impressive, take from the subjects of them all doubt about God. Those steady ongoings of the soul in honor and service are the continuous witness of God's presence. How can he doubt God's presence whose cry is : —

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay;
And he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

When good men look upon the task of making the world good, it becomes hopeless without God. If there is no sympathy at the heart of things with the teacher, the prophet, the reformer; if there is no eternal gracious presence mediating itself through good men in the lofty service of their kind, what can we do? Look out upon the lust and greed and cruelty of the world and behold our task. Who is sufficient for this task? Unless we can say our sufficiency is of God, we must abandon all high work in despair. I stood once in the citadel that overlooks the city of Cairo. It was evening. There lay the city on the plain, teeming with men and women, ignorant, unclean, sinning, and suffering, holding within its compass an epitome of the tragedy of the world. There it spread till it crumbled in the surrounding desert, lost in the desert's loneliness and gloom. And towering there in the afterglow of sunset on the edge of the boundless waste of sand stood the Pyramids, ancient, weird, solemn, preternatural witnesses of immemorial wretchedness, desolation, and despair. What man, what company of men,

what church, what order of churches, can match this ancient and nameless sorrow? I came from this vision to the Christian mission in the great city. There I found the ground of hope: —

"God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early."

There is, finally, man's greatest enemy, death. Death is the enemy of man because man is a lover. He has an instinctive love of life; when true to himself, he rises into the love of the dutiful life; when he is reasonably fortunate, his existence is at its heart a network of noble attachments. The vital instinct hates death; the conscientious servant stands opposed to death; the lover of his kind, of his kindred, of his home, is at war with death. Wherever you find a nature burning with vitality, a conscience supreme over the courses of thought and conduct, a heart with a thousand dear interests and a few immortal loves, there you find the spirit that refuses the comfort of extinction. Wherever human life is great, it must wish to go on; wherever it has the capacity for worth, it should go on; wher-

ever it is a high and beautiful character, if the Eternal cares for such things, it must go on.

For what does the universe care? We may answer, only for the endless transformations of its own energy. In that case the universe is beneath contempt. Honor and worship of it, to a clear mind, are impossible. On that basis religion could not have begun; on that basis the great religions could never have come into existence. If the universe cares for nothing but the endless transformation of its own being, it is simply brutal and contemptible.

Let us assume that this is its character. How, then, can we account for the beauty into which this contemptible universe bursts in the great souls of the race, in the normal human homes of our kind, in the heart of the faithful the world over? Here is a contradiction too great for the sound mind to accept. Can the clean come out of the unclean, the high soul out of the brutal, the spirit all love, all service, all sympathy, whose whole being is a holy sacrificial fire, rise up out of the depths of an immoral or unmoral universe? If we must choose among mysteries, we must, while we follow reason, set this one aside as incredible and impossible.

High capacities such as we find in men, high character and service such as we find in good men, would seem to be, if the universe has any

moral sense in it, lasting utilities, enduring values, abiding splendors. And this is what we mean by God. He is the conscience of the universe. He surveys our human world. He sees as we do, but with an appreciation infinitely deeper, the high capacity of man. In a multitude of cases it is held down to the form of mere capacity by ignorance, perversity, and the tragic courses of society. Still, high capacity it remains; shall not a wise and noble universe rescue and conserve that capacity? God surveys our human world again, and notes moral excellence, distinct worth, honor in head and heart. He sees the vision, the service, and the worth of love. He sees men caring for one another, life dear because others are alive, and a world of joy born out of this reciprocity of noble human hearts. This is a vision found only in man's world. Is it not worth more to a universe with a conscience than the entire realm of physical being? Is it not a value to the universe, a splendor in it? Shall not the Infinite conscience keep forever this fair result?

Individually, men may be willing to die and sleep in eternal silence. They are unwilling that their beloved should pass out of being. They are unwilling not only because of the bereavement to themselves, but also because of the sacrifice to the universe, the outrage upon the work

of the Infinite. A lost soul, especially when that soul is a soul of worth and beauty, is more than the Eternal can well sustain. As Plato said, if souls should die, the spiritual being of the universe would finally become extinct. It would be hard to show that spiritual creation without spiritual conservation might not come to this, — a universe become a body of death, sunk to a rubbish-heap. For this result we cannot look, if there is sense and power in the processes of existence. Weeds and flowers alike are gathered by the gardener's hand, but for different ends. The weeds are waste, the flowers are joy. Men and all living things are under the power of death, but, we must believe, for different purposes. Men would seem to belong to the heart of the universe; to be among its permanent values, splendors, delights.

I have said nothing of the suffering that death brings to the living. If it were believed by all bereaved mothers and fathers that death is the end, that belief would either degrade and corrupt the human heart, or it would drive it insane. Destroy hope here and you make existence too heavy to be borne; destroy hope here and you break down our humanity; destroy hope here and you call the suffering race to arms against the pitilessness and horror of the universe. For it is not mere ideas with which we

are here dealing; it is flesh and blood, it is the loving and suffering heart of man; it is the forces essential to the existence of a living and an ascending humanity.

But how shall this be? Kill the optic nerve and you quench sight, paralyze the auditory nerve and you hear no more, destroy the sensory nerves and you become dead to the world, fix the brain in the frost of death and the mind is gone. How plausible and complete it sounds. We are still the slaves of sense and not its masters. Souls have appeared among us in bodies blind, deaf, and dumb; they have awakened to the glory of our world, shared the best life of our kind, spoken to us burning words out of the night, and we see in this no testimony to the independence and sovereignty of soul. We close the eye, the ear, the mouth, and leave only feeling as the outlet of thought, and look how it comes forth a river of light and joy. We wish to close all means of exit and still to demand the response of mind. We destroy the brain-habitation, and after that we still expect the soul to answer our call. When you take away the workman's tools, you do not expect him to work. When you pull his house to the ground, you expect him, if he is wise and alert, to get out of it before it falls. Souls speak through the senses. When one sense after another fails,

they still speak through the sense that remains. When all the senses are gone, they still make signs to us, they signal to us like ships in the darkness plunging in heavy seas. More than this we have no reason to expect.

We do not yet understand the meaning of our greatest discoveries. Consider the miracle of wireless telegraphy. There is no mind without brain; so runs the light atheistic epigram. Here in the wireless electric force is something as invisible as any soul. It leaves the body that you have made for it and goes in search of a body in the unseen. While out on its errand it is bodiless, flying along the constitution of the world. Consider this current with intelligence in it leaving a body here, seeking and finding a body there. So much for a cosmic current. Shall we look for less in the human soul? When it leaves its body in time, shall we not think of it as a current sweeping the unseen, searching eternity for the body which it has pleased God to prepare for it there, and in that body reporting the memories, the thoughts, the achievements, sufferings, and hopes of its entire earthly career? If with man these wondrous transitions are possible, are the transitions of souls from the tent here to the house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens, impossible? Ye do greatly err, O hopeless soul.

The last word is between a soulless and a soulful universe, a moral and an unmoral Infinite, an Eternal whose attitude toward man is one of total indifference, or one of boundless love and pity. At heart the universe is either a universe of woe or of joy. And this comes round to the great antithesis with which we began. It is either God and infinite hope, or atheism and absolute despair. We choose God and infinite hope as our faith because they light up nature to the heart, because they account for all the precious things in our human world, because they cover man in the day of battle and assure him of final triumph. We reject atheism and despair because they leave nature in the blackness of darkness, because they turn man at his best into the burning criticism and condemnation of the universe that brought him forth, and because they convert the future into life's grave and love's horror. We abandon atheism and inhumanity for faith in the Lord God of our fathers, for the God and Father of Jesus Christ. For no God and no hope we substitute the Eternal God and infinite hope. We cry with the Psalmist: —

> "Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
> Thou hast holden my right hand.
> Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
> And afterward receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but thee ?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth :
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion
for ever."

II

THE HUMANITY OF GOD

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."
John xiv, 9.

THE greatest thing that we know is man; the greatest man that we know is Jesus Christ. When, therefore, we hear him say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," we have a guide to the heart of the Eternal of infinite moment.

These words have been used to prove the divinity of Jesus Christ; I intend to use them as indicating the humanity of God. They have been used mainly, one might almost say exclusively, as giving a supremely exalted vision of Jesus; I think they lead to a supremely exalted and consoling vision of God. Jesus no longer needs vindication or exaltation; we cannot think of a wiser or better than he. He is the best that we know, and by his sovereign goodness we judge individuals, families, nations, and races; by it we judge the universe.

There is something wonderfully impressive in this instinctive retreat in our time upon humanity. When human nature is true to itself, there

is nothing equal to it, there is, indeed, nothing that will bear comparison with it among things that we see. It appeals to sense by its helpfulness. Men are needful to men; the industry of the world, with all its cruelty, is still organized brotherhood. Men could not sow and reap, spin and weave, cross the land and cover the sea, as they do, but for the help of their kind. Civilization is a witness to the helpfulness of man to man. Every building, farm, factory, locomotive, ship, store, bank, is a presentation to the eye of the sympathy in which man lives. Our city, with its schools, churches, hospitals, asylums, and with all its avenues and homes steeped in a thousand stirring and tender associations, is a revelation to sense of the power of our humanity.

This human nature reflected in history makes its appeal to imagination. Men have done great things: they have set bounds to the ferocity of nature; they have turned the cosmos at a thousand points of antagonism into the servant of society; they are now whispering their thought into instruments of mechanical device, and the whisper pursues and overtakes the traveler by land and by sea; they have wrought out languages of great fullness and beauty; they have entertained splendid visions and recorded them in imperishable words; they have construed the

meaning of the nature beyond them, the nature within them, and they have created by their insight and sympathy great literatures. They have taken form, as in sculpture and building; color, as in painting; sound, as in music and in poetry, and they have made these the finished and impressive representatives of the deepest thoughts and the holiest feelings. They have established governments, and striven for the realization in human society of sublime ideals. When one adds to this achievement the greater religions, — the religion of Buddha, the religion of the Hebrews, the religion of Jesus Christ, — and considers these religions as creations of the human soul, one is overawed in the presence of the range, the splendor, and the majesty of man. When one allows these great reflections of man in the vast and precious mirror of history to enter and possess the imagination, it is impossible not to think of him as the superlative wonder.

There is in life besides all this, love. Man counts to man more than all else because of love. Every successive generation of lovers hallows anew this weary world. The light of their eyes is brighter than the sun, the treasure in their hearts is beyond estimate. They perpetually renew the meaning of existence, and convert the old earth into a scene of endless ro-

mance and tenderness. Where is there a hill or valley, stream or lake, city or shore, that is not thus invested with the sanctity of the lover's dream and passion? The planet rolls in an atmosphere fifty miles in depth, but deeper far, purer and richer infinitely, is that other atmosphere in which it flies, created out of the heart of the immemorial succession of lovers. This treasure that invests nature with new meaning is increased by every true human home. A child is frail, it is indeed nothing, measured against the cosmos, but in value it is infinite. Here is a possession that makes great the human heart. The love of a parent for a child reacts upon his sense of the worth of humanity; human nature is greatened in this passion; every extension of love issues in a new consciousness of the value of man. The love that counts the lives of others precious, that serves them in the light of a lofty ideal, that identifies its good with theirs, that holds itself as the sovereign value in existence and of more worth infinitely than all that can be set against it, that love which is the core, the highest working power, indeed nearly the whole constructive force in human history, makes the nature that it glorifies a unique approach to the Eternal.

I have said that this instinctive retreat upon our humanity is impressive. Consider the times

in which we live: only a few years since, man was leveled down to the animal, or the animal was leveled up to man. How old and how foolish that error now seems! Where men begin is one thing; to what they come is another. Origins are nothing; ends are everything. In the light of the end the beginning is transformed, as the fire of sunset sometimes sweeps backward and transfigures the east. The full-grown man shows the differentiating soul that lived in the infant that seemed but a bundle of animal wants. The full-grown man, in clear and serious recognition of moral ideals, in earnest and undiscouraged pursuit of them, strong with the tender strength of a great and wide-reaching love, carries the origin of life back into the heart of the Infinite. The man whom we select as hero, whom wise and good men delight to honor, who wins and keeps the confidence of the enlightened and the upright, differentiates the humanity that he wears from the animal order beneath him by the whole diameter of being. The harvest is the great discriminator; the grain, the fruit from the garden and the orchard, the various products of the soil, are a kind of final judgment upon the character of the seeds and beginnings whence they came. They may look alike at the first; at the last they are of widely different values and uses.

Because man has an animal life, he is not therefore in that order. Look toward the end, consider the full-grown Christian man, weigh the worth of his soul, and you will find it easy to believe in the unique origin, mission, and destiny of man.

Perhaps the deepest words in the Parable of the Lost Son are these: "When he came to himself." He had gone away, far away from himself, he had gone into the life beneath him, where for a time he lost all memory of the existence for which he was made, and where all vision of the heights above him and the world of love that he had left behind faded out. That could not last; his nature was divinely made, and it could not permanently endure this outrage upon it. His shame, his want, his isolation, his suffering, was the clear note of his nobility. It was this that gave him no rest, that bred thought, that brought about the great return. "And when he came to himself," — until that was done, nothing of any avail could be attempted; when that was done, all high things became possible. Then the vision returned of his old home, his father's love, the possibility of reinstatement in it, at least of service in the order of his father's home; then, and greatest of all, came the resolve: "I will arise and go to my father." When he came to himself, he returned to his

father, and when we come to our humanity, we come to our God. For an entire generation, scientists, scholars, thinkers, students of current literature, and reading men and women went away from themselves; they dwelt with delight among the forms of life beneath them, biology was everything, anthropology was nothing, or only a branch of the great tree of life. So the sense died away of the august meaning of our human existence. So men and women became skeptical and hopeless. So the sublime beliefs of the world, and the high wisdom of suffering and aspiring genius, took on the character of noble fiction. There was nothing left but natural history, as of the bee or the ant or the tiger, invested with a halo by the creative imagination of man.

Parallel to this is the immemorial departure of man from himself. Of the path of selfishness it is still true that broad is the way and wide is the gate, and many there be who go in thereat. The standing sorrow and disgrace of our race is this immersion of man in the life foreign to him. Listen to an ape scraping a Stradivarius violin, and you have an image of what takes place when man adopts from the animal order unmodified the law of the survival of the fittest; listen to an Ole Bull using the same instrument, and you have a suggestion of the way in which the harsh

and terrible order beneath man is transfigured by man when his heart is full of love. Men borrow the maxims of the brute for the regulation of much in life, — domestic, commercial, political, and international. War is always the ape tearing discords out of the heavenly violin. Conflict of every kind, the unbrotherliness of man to man, is a departure from self. It entails sorrow, degradation, loss; it brings with it inevitably the ever feebler sense of the soul in man made for righteousness, and the soul in the universe that we call God. It comes to regard with ill-concealed contempt all spiritual beliefs, all spiritual institutions, all thoughts and forces that witness to the dignity of mankind. So far as I can discover, the only two doctrines that appeal to men and women who thus degrade themselves, who spend their strength in a vital slander upon the race to which they belong, are the doctrines of total depravity and of a salvation that is simply the dead lift of Omnipotence of a humanity, or elected portion of it, out of the gutter to which it has sunk. The number of rascals who have found these two doctrines credible and comfortable is, I believe, very great.

The word to all is the old message: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" return to yourself, come again to your abandoned

humanity. Nowhere but here can you find God, nowhere but here can you see the meaning of human existence, nowhere but here can you behold the ideals that roof in the true Church like the starry order of a Syrian midnight. Come back to the sense of relation to your kind; come back to the social order in which you have been placed, and there acknowledge duty, behold the standard of it in Jesus Christ, and bend yourself to obedience. Then, finding your own human soul, you will surely find God.

Look at Jesus. Consider him simply as the perfect man. There is no higher name than that. The language of the creeds seems unreal in the presence of his spotless and sublime humanity. We gain one or two glimpses of his childhood, and how full of wonder and beauty it is! We have one clear glance into his boyhood, and we mark the thirst for knowledge, the reverence for authority, the flow of deep questions, and the high spirit that fill it with grace and charm. When we see him again, he has become a man, he has risen into the consciousness of his Father in heaven, into the consciousness of his Sonhood to God. We see him at the Jordan, accepting baptism as the sign of the new world that has risen into clearness in his soul. We follow him into the wilderness, and watch him under his great temptation. In trial he is so patient, so strong;

and out of trial he comes so pure and mighty. We hear his teaching, we listen to his parables, we go with him in his errands of mercy, and try to count his countless acts of compassion and healing. We retire with him for prayer, we come again with him to the solemn business of living. We keep close to him while the great misunderstanding concerning him grows blacker and blacker, we are with him in the heart of the awful tragedy. We watch the supremely good, apprehended, tried, condemned, and crucified as the supremely bad, and in it all we behold comprehension so clear, pity so absolute, strength so victorious. This is man at his highest; this is our humanity carried to its best. This is the glory of human history. Nothing is wanting here that the wise and noble mind can ask for; everything is here that should be present in human character. And it is this perfect human reality that gives to Jesus Christ his unique influence over men, that lends to his character its endless interest for men. You may call him divine or semi-divine, God or the Son of God; these are names, significant for some, insignificant for others. What you must note is that the sovereign soul of Jesus is his humanity; that is the reality, that is the truth of his being. Human nature, the greatest thing that we know, becomes in him the highest and best.

The method of approach to God in the text implies an ascent through man to God, and also a descent of God in man.

1. There is the ascent through man to God. We survey all things that we know, all forms of life that we know; we survey man. We know that we are bounded by the infinite as some island might know itself bounded by a shoreless sea. We know ourselves as living in the infinite, as this planet might know itself as living in the infinite spaces. We long to be able to reach and read the character of the Eternal. We look at all things, at all forms of life, as expressions of the Eternal; we look at man. Shall we construe the character of the Eternal by what is lowest or by what is highest, by the beast of prey or by the apostle of love, by cosmic hostilities to man or by the human heart, by the mystery of pain and death or by the glorious epoch of sacrifice and gladness in history, by what is darkest and most terrible or by what is most luminous and most precious?

If God is wholly like the cosmic hostility to man, if He is wholly like the beast of prey, how could there flow from Him all the gentleness and beauty of the world? If He is dark and cruel, if He is loveless and pitiless, how could He have made the human heart? If we say that He is dark and cruel, we can no longer hold Him to

be the Maker of noble men; if we hold Him as the wise and good, we find in Him the Author of our human love, and if we cannot reconcile his love with other things that we see, we can wait until more light shall arrive. If we read God's character in the light of the lowest order of life, we have nothing in Him to account for man; if we read God wholly by the highest, we fail to reconcile the forms of cruelty with his character. But the future may make all this plain.

Now this ascent to God through man receives its highest expression in Jesus Christ. There is nothing in God to account for Jesus unless God is love; there is nothing in all the universe to account for Jesus unless at the heart of the universe there is a love equal to his. The cause must equal the effect; Jesus is not self-created, he points backward to his origin in the Eternal. In accepting Jesus in his full humanity, we rise to a God who is equal to the task of creating such a being as Jesus, and we are justified in holding that our God is as good, as kind, as inexhaustible in compassion and hope for man as Jesus was. A God as good as Jesus; that we obtain by the method of the text; that result is the illumination and consolation of human history; for a better than Jesus we do not need, a better than he we cannot conceive.

2. This ascent through man to God implies a previous descent of God in man. If we can find God through man, it is because God lives in man. In man's passion for truth, in the laws of his intellect that guide him in his search for truth, and in the intellectual integrity that is his dearest mental possession, God has set up his order. In man's passion for righteousness, in the laws of his conscience and will that lead him on in the attainment of righteousness, in the sincerity and chastity of heart that is his most precious moral possession, God has again set up his order. In man's passion for beauty, in his wonder and joy in its presence, in his consolation and hope as he beholds the beautiful aspects of the universe, and in his sweet oblivion as he stands in the vision of beauty, God again reveals his order. In the heart of man as lover, parent, son, friend, citizen, in the great and constant tides of affection, in the sincerities, loyalties, endearments, and most holy ardors of the soul, God has made an amazing disclosure of himself. In Him we live and move and have our being, as the bird in the air, as the fish in the sea, and in us God lives and moves and has his being, as the air in the lung of the fish and of the bird, as the living fire of a living universe burns in the blood of everything that breathes. In the structure of the intellect, in

the plan of the conscience, in the order of æsthetic feeling, and in the outgoings of the human heart, God dwells. The kingdom of God is indeed within you, the King is within you, our God is Immanuel.

Here again in Jesus we see the great revealer. There is the intelligence of Jesus. We are beginning to understand something of its range, richness, depth, originality, and, better still, its absolute integrity. Men are more and more thankful for the comprehension, the calmness, the confidence, and the perfect sanity of the mind of Jesus. His thinking is a new intimation of the Sovereign Mind; it is self-conscious, self-directed, perfectly normal, and yet there is in it the inevitable hint of the power of the Infinite, such as one gains from the approach of morning or evening. In sunrise and sunset, in the ebb and flow of the tides, in the coming and going of the great constellations, in the whole cosmic order and movement, we recognize the power of the Eternal; and in the intelligence of Jesus, in its wide, wise, conclusive, and benign operation, there is the intimation of God's presence.

We come with awe to the conscience of Jesus. He holds the world to the highest standard; he is boundless in compassion, and yet he will rest in nothing but righteousness. God is

to him the righteous Father; righteousness is the burden of his greatest discourse, the righteousness in man that beholds and that tries to reproduce the righteousness of God. The moral nature of Jesus is incomparably great; the moral universe that lives in the conscience of Jesus is the sublimest possession of mankind. And here there is even a stronger suggestion of Another. You open a letter that has come to you from afar, and in the familiar characters you see a soul; the letter is not complete in itself, it is a message to one soul from another. You look at the picture of some dear friend; the picture calls up the reality that it represents. You hear the voice of a friend, full of melody and tenderness, and you think of the rich and tender heart whose beat is in that awakening and consoling voice. Now just as that letter, that picture, that voice, is incomplete in itself; just as it brings in the vision of another, so the conscience of Christ in its order, in its sublimity, and in its instinctive and unerring action, brings in the vision of God.

There is in Jesus the sense of beauty. We have noticed all too slightly and slowly this aspect of his character. His receptivities are fitted to the loveliness of the universe; the spirit of beauty in nature passes into his being and lives in his entire manner of thinking and

speaking. His parables are bathed in the freshness and charm of the morning; his words carry in them the reflected color and tone of beautiful things, as the bird carries in its plumage the burning mystery of light. The soul of Jesus is alive to all beauty, — sea, mountain, wilderness, the lilies of the field, the birds of heaven, the singing industries and cheerful ways of men, the sun that shines equally on the evil and the good, the rain that falls alike on the just and the unjust. In this vision in which his soul so often found rest, in which he so often met God, we meet God. God is within him in this wondrous capacity, in this wondrous experience. The beauty of the Lord our God is within him and upon him.

There is the heart of Christ. Who may speak of that? Ask the little children who can never forget his face as he took them in his arms and blessed them, the mothers who came to him when in deepest anxiety, the centurion who appealed to him for his son, the centurion who besought him for his servant; ask Mary Magdalene, whose distress he healed, whose self-respect he restored; Peter, whose disloyalty he forgave, whose weakness he replaced with the strength of grateful love; John, whose whole being he filled with a celestial passion; the sisters in Bethany, whose joy and sorrow he trans-

figured; the publicans and sinners, whose lives he redeemed from shame and despair; the men who nailed him to the cross, over whom he prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" the penitent thief, who re-received from him as he entered the great mystery the immortal assurance: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" the soldier who stood guard under the cross, who saw it all, and who said: "Truly, this man was the Son of God;" — ask all these, and the multitude that no man can number whom they represent, what they think of the heart of Christ! The answer rolled back with a voice like the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings must be: "The heart of Christ is the sanctuary of humanity, and the presence that fills it is the presence of the King Immortal, invisible, eternal, the only wise God, our Father in heaven."

Science tells us of atoms and their motions, and the world is indeed a wonder as it is thus surveyed; but we refuse to believe that this view leads in any way to a final account of being. Science tells us of force, that it is forever changing its form and forever remaining the same, boundless, perdurable, eternal, defining its life like Shelley's cloud: —

"I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die."

but all the force of which we have any direct knowledge issues from intelligent will, and even this carried to infinity cannot account for our human world. We read of the Eternal as King and Judge. Most true and most solemn are these designations of the reigning and judicial presence in the soul and in human history; but we cannot allow the King and Judge to dim our vision of the Highest. The eye of the climber on the great mountain seeks the summit; thither he tends, there and there alone can his nature rest. The vision of the beholder of God sweeps ever upward, past God in wood and stone, past God in the light of setting suns, in the wonder that invests all the spheres of life, beyond God in the law and order that express themselves in the lofty offices of king and judge; the eye travels up to the utmost height of the moral being of God. There and there alone can the vision of God end in peace. The greatest thing that we know is man, the greatest man that we know is Jesus Christ; and our worthiest thought of God regards Him as the God and Father of Jesus Christ. The humanity of God is given in the humanity of man; it is given supremely in the humanity of Jesus. We ascend to God through man and his sovereign leader; through man and his sovereign leader we receive God. This is our faith. Against the wild indifference

of the cosmos, the inscrutable mysteries of moral wrong, pain, and death, and the fearful inhumanities of man to man; in the presence of the worthy, in the presence of the Worthiest, we believe in the dear, eternal humanity of God.

III

MAN THE APOSTLE OF GOD

"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John."
John i, 6.

We speak of the twelve apostles, and we do well so to speak. We picture to ourselves these men going forth from Jesus, by the will of God, with a message for mankind. The picture is one of the loftiest, one of the most inspiring in human history. So much definiteness, dignity, scope, power, and permanent meaning enter the lives of these famous and happy men.

But there is an earlier and broader apostleship. Here it is in John the Baptist. He preceded Jesus; yet he was an apostle. An apostle of whom? God. An apostle for whom? God in the service of Jesus. An apostle for what? That he might witness to his time of the Highest. And here in the apostleship of the Baptist we have the apostleship of humanity: "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John."

Was this the belief of his parents and kindred about the Baptist? Was it the belief of this biographer of Jesus, who had been, at one time,

a disciple of the Baptist? Or was it the belief of the Baptist about himself? If the text embodies the opinion of his father and mother and kindred, it is interesting; if it records the opinion of the author of the Fourth Gospel, it is still more interesting; if it holds the conviction of the Baptist about himself, it is of the highest interest. Let us assume that this is the case, that the Baptist solemnly believed that he was a man sent from God. On the ground of this assumption we must ask several questions, and we must try to answer them.

1. How did the Baptist reach his assurance of God? How did he move into this consciousness of God? How did he become clear and sure and serene about this infinite concern of the soul?

He was born of religious parents. His home was a home of faith. His father and mother believed that all that came to them came by the will of the Highest. The boy was accustomed to this way of thinking. He was led to behold all things in God. He had been told that of all the good things that had come from God to his parents, he was the best. He himself had come from God. All life, all love, all great endowment, all high opportunity, all things in the world, except sin, had come from God. In this view of existence the Baptist had been bred.

It cannot be too often repeated that the loss

of early religious training is a loss that can never afterward be made good. If indeed belief in God is a superstition, if it is indulgence in a mere dream, if it is the creation of reality out of the pious but foolish imagination, it is infinitely better to grow up without education in faith. But if there is any least probability that there may be something great answering to our thought of God, it is a loss unspeakable to miss habituation in that thought in our earliest years. For it was observed by a Greek philosopher, more than two thousand years ago, that the difference is not slight, but immense, and indeed of sovereign moment, whether one is or is not trained from earliest years according to the truth. The young mind, like fine wool, takes into itself forever the dye of great ideas.

This son of priestly parents would be versed in the history of his people. He would come to know his nation as founded by Moses, as led by Joshua, as judged by Samuel, as ruled by David, as interpreted by Isaiah, as consecrated in the great Psalms, as pondered in the sublime mystery of its existence in the epic of Job. Here is a nation in unbroken association with God. Its history, as understood by those who made it, is a manifestation of God. Its origin, its great epochs, its great leaders, its great experiences, its vast hopes, are bound up with the

belief in God. The nation is inseparable from this faith in God; it is penetrated with the consciousness of his justice and mercy; it lives and moves in Him as the planet lives and moves in the bosom of infinite space. This boy cannot read a page of national history without meeting the idea of God; he cannot understand a character or an event in that history without assuming the reality of God. As this boy absorbs the history, he absorbs the sense of God; as he reproduces the best life of his race, he reproduces their highest faith.

Is there nothing here for us? Do the great epochs of history mean nothing for our time? Do we not see in the origin of Christianity the involvement of the life of its Founder and the lives of his apostles with the being of God? In all the teachings of Jesus, in all the conduct of Jesus, in all the sufferings of Jesus, in his life, and in his death, he is God's. How can we understand this man or his religion apart from the reality of God? How can we understand Christianity as a force in human history apart from the power of God in it?

Does the Reformation mean nothing on its spiritual side? The liberation that it wrought for the intellect we acknowledge; the freedom that it achieved for the spirit we confess. When Luther stands before the Diet of Worms and

pleads for the life of reasonable manhood, when he there and then opens wide the iron gate that for a thousand years had kept the intellect of Europe in bondage, when he at a single stroke inaugurates the modern epoch with its free humanity and its vast hope, are we to detach this service from the idea that made it possible for the strong man to do his work? It all came from the happy and triumphant sense of God. For Luther, God was in it all. The man who did this monumental deed believed that he did it by the inspiration of God. Does this count for nothing?

To many Cromwell's piety has seemed pure hypocrisy. Why? Because they desired no change; because they were satisfied under Charles I; because they did not revolt at tyranny; because they were without the aspirations of freemen. To others Oliver Cromwell means something great and noble. Here was a nation to be delivered. Here, as Milton said, was the people of England to be defended. Here was a system of despotism, controlling church and state, and standing like a monster with its heel on the neck of a great race. And here is Oliver Cromwell confronting all that. He cannot right this hideous wrong in his own strength. He can do it only in the strength of the Lord of Hosts. The deed is done, the nation is freed, the new epoch of English democracy is inaugurated, and

Oliver Cromwell says it is the Lord that hath done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Is no respect due to the consciousness of the man who brought about this vast and wholesome revolution? To him God was wisdom, power, and triumph; shall He be to us only the pure dream of a strong man?

When in the Continental Congress meditating great things the chaplain is called, and the whole assembly joins in prayer to Almighty God, when out of this mood begotten by faith and worship there issues the manhood that makes, that supports, that forever establishes the Declaration of Independence, are we to accept the gift of a nation born in the sense of God, defended in the consciousness of God, educated into strength by men who confessed that God is the final refuge of afflicted peoples, and are we to reject or regard as weak, or vain, or empty the solemn feeling for the Eternal in which the country lives? When we read Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural, when we hear the man speak who had done most, who had suffered most, that this nation might continue one and indivisible, are we not moved in sympathy when he lays bare the foundations of his mind as a mind resting in God, built up out of God, filled with the consolation and hope that faith in the Highest alone can bring to man?

But this Hebrew boy came yet nearer to the great mystery. He became a man. He found within himself the war between desire and duty, between the flesh and the spirit, between the high moral ideal and the baser passions of his being. Here in his mind is the sublime image of what he ought to be. That image is his ideal. It lays upon him the obligation to become a just and good man. Here are his passions. They care nothing for the just and good life, they want only their own gratification. And here is the youth conscious of this war in his being. Here he stands, looking toward his ideal with honor in his eyes, with strong resolve in his heart; there he is sore beset, baffled often, turned back, brought almost to despair by his sense of weakness. He finds himself as far behind his ideal as when in awe and in tears he first beheld it rise in his soul. His moral career is arrested. He is unable to advance, the hope of his conscience begins to fade. He is unable to become the man that he yet knows that he ought to become. Here he returns to God. He tests the reality of his faith. He opens his nature to God. More and more he lives and moves and has his being in the consciousness of God, and he comes forth clad with conquering power, free, joyous, able to follow in the fiery path of his flying ideal.

Has the youth of to-day no such experience?

Has he not his high moral ideal? Has he not his contrary winds, his opposing passions? Are not his resolves often broken in defeat? Are not his efforts often rewarded with despair? Who can give him the victory over himself? Who can enable him to become a just and good man? Who can give him a pure heart? Who can fill him with reverence and tenderness in the presence of human life? He tries the old faith. He puts to the test the thought of God. He does it like a man, deeply, devoutly, persistently, with the whole energy of his nature. He puts himself under the sway of the thought of God. Look at his face; it is not the same face. Look at his character and note its strength. Look at his experience and mark its growing harmony. Look at his life and behold the freedom, power, and joy of it. This man has found God, like Jacob of old. He has wrestled with God for the conservation of the ideal, for the reconciliation of duty and desire, and he has prevailed. He has gone forth with the blessing of the Eternal upon his invigorated and prevailing spirit. He cries with the energy of the apostle, "I know him whom I have believed." Again he cries, "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled," declare we unto you. The exigency of the spiritual life has made the faith of

the ages, the faith of his fathers, his personal faith. For religion at second hand, he has received, through the moral struggle of existence, an original revelation, a personal vision of God.

2. Our second question is this: How did the Baptist come to believe that he was sent of God? Did this faith come to him all at once? If it came to him as a vision, was it not a vision that disclosed its meaning slowly? Did not doubts now and then assail him? Was he not tempted at times to conclude that his existence was too mean and brief to sustain any high relation to the Eternal? If it was a prevailing faith, a struggling and yet victorious belief, like the ship that holds on her way in spite of head winds and heavy seas and cloudy skies, how did he reach it? Was it a theory of life, a philosophy of his personal existence?

It was this. Like other men, he was bound to study himself; like them, he was bound to find his special vocation. Like all true men, he was bound to relate his special vocation to the God in whom he believed, and to the higher life of the people whom he served. As he became the object of his own thought, as his nature stood in the vision of his own intelligence, he saw that his special vocation was that of a preacher of righteousness. This was the thing for which he was best fitted; this was the work to which his

strongest desires led him. And this task of proclaiming the fundamental interest for his race of righteousness related him as servant to the righteous will of God. He went to his task. He gave himself to it. He suffered for it in a thousand ways. More and more he took refuge in the Almighty righteousness. Here he found his message, and here he was clothed with power to declare it. He came to see that here lay the highest significance of his existence in this world. He was sent forth from the Eternal conscience with a message to the conscience of his race.

No believer in God and in the tremendous moral need of man can doubt that the Baptist was right in his high faith about himself. But how is it possible to believe that ordinary persons are, in any true sense, apostles of God? How can we reach the consoling assurance that we are sent into this world on a high errand from God?

We must ask what is the highest function, the chief end of man? Is it simply to eat and to drink, and to-morrow to die? Is man's essential life one of sensuous enjoyment? Is he fulfilling all the capacities of his being when he gathers food like the ant or bee, when he herds with his kind like the beasts of the field, when he organizes himself into a society for purposes of trade and physical comfort, when he reads his

own history as part of the animal life of the world, when he considers himself in purpose and conduct wholly in the power of pleasure and pain, and concludes that in origin, career, and destiny he is altogether of this world, a mere creature of space and time?

No believer in God can accept this account of human existence. Man has a supreme end. That supreme end, according to an ancient philosopher, is activity in the line of the highest excellence. That activity at length carries the mind upward where, in rare moments, it can share the beatitude of the Eternal mind. According to the old catechism, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. These definitions call up a range of experience of which all true men are conscious. The deepest need of man is the need of a sound mind and a clean heart. The deepest need of society is the same. The sound mind and the humane heart, in the industrial sphere, in the social realm, in the world of politics, in the vast and complicated life of mankind, would issue in a new heaven and a new earth.

In our final account of ourselves we find that we stand face to face with the vocation of the Baptist. What was his special vocation turns out to be our final vocation. Our last, our supreme interest is in righteousness. If we are

lovers, our love must be filled with rectitude; if we are husbands and wives, our existence in that august relation must be under the dominion of righteousness; if we are fathers and mothers, our privilege must be fired with the sense of duty. For what can be said in honor of parents, if they fail to train their children in moral power, if they fail to set them in the centres of moral influence, if they do not give them the sense of the transcendent worth of clean hands and a pure heart? If we are related to one another as masters and servants, our fundamental interest is still righteousness. In that great relation the final question is this: Are we just in it? Are we faithful as servants? Are we humane as masters? And when we come to politics, we shall not differ. If there is any one thing for which above all other things the statesman should stand, it is righteousness. The statesman cannot, perhaps, avoid mistakes. He may not always be able to see the thing fittest and best. And here good men may differ and differ widely. But the purpose should be straight, the aim should be true. This is the deepest lesson in the career of Mr. Gladstone. He made many mistakes. He saw them, and like a man he confessed them with regret. And yet he held, and could truthfully hold, that his eye had been single. By those who differed from him, no less than by

those who agreed with him, it was confessed that here was a great Christian statesman. His vocation as a politician was national, international, human righteousness.

What, then, is our conclusion? That the last and highest intention of our being is that we become wise in mind and sound in heart; that man becomes man by dealing justly, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. Here is the final meaning of our being, — a society of men living in righteousness. And in the service of this solemn end, all true thoughts, all exalted feelings, all high endeavors, are subject to the inspiration of God. As one purposes in his heart to be just and to help to make the world just, he entertains God's thought concerning him when God created him. This man becomes more and more inspirable under God as the poet, true to his poetic gift, becomes more and more inspirable under the appeal of nature and under the vision of humanity. We know that we are sent from God because God is a righteous God, and because the supreme and endless interest of man is righteousness. We come from God to repeat, as far as we may, in the fields of time the eternal righteousness. As the needle in the compass turns toward the pole, as it knows its function however wide and wild and lonely the sea may be, as it keeps in all zones and in all

seasons, and in all the vexed courses of its life the sense that it is a witness to a greater than itself, so man trembles toward the Infinite. When true to himself, he knows, in all gales of passion, on every sea of interest, on the boundless stormy ways of ambition, on the shoreless human meanings of home, industry, citizenship, and racial fellowship, that he was made to testify of another, a mightier, a juster, and a kinder than himself. The vocation of the magnetic needle is to point toward the pole; the vocation of man is to bear witness to God.

3. What did the Baptist mean by his apostleship? This is, after all, the deepest question. We must not linger long among words; we must go to the realities which they represent. We must descend into the world of meanings. There is the home of the intellect, there is the inspiration of the heart.

We may well believe that this great man saw clearly that only a moral being can reveal the moral God. If the Supreme Being were power and only power, the cosmos would be a mightier apostle of the Infinite than man. If the Eternal were power and wisdom and no more, again the heavens would declare his glory, and the firmament would show his handiwork, as man could not. But if we do not reach the core of the Eternal until we come to his conscience, until

we touch his love, then not nature but man, not the cosmos but humanity, is the great apostle of his being. In the order that on the whole favors the good, and that goes against the evil, in the law that ordains that the wicked shall perish from among men, and that the meek shall inherit the earth, there is indeed one great witness to the conscience of the Most High. Even this witness is a witness through society. Besides, it leaves us at the threshold of the vast subject. And other similar observations lead little nearer the heart of the matter.

It is undeniable that only a moral being can mediate a moral God. If God is spirit, if He is both hidden in the order of the universe and an infinite excess of goodness over and above that order, where is the path for this lightening of the Divine love, if man is not? Only the intellect of man can discover and declare the thoughts of God; only the conscience of man can behold and reveal the conscience of God; only the heart of man can receive and proclaim the love of God; only the moral will of man can apprehend and utter the moral power of God. God as might, as wisdom and might, lives and speaks in the cosmos; but God as a moral being lives and speaks only in a moral humanity.

Can your home, ever so richly and artistically furnished, tell your guest the whole of your char-

acter? At best, there is in that home only a hint of your soul. Can your sweet canary bird, your faithful horse, or your devoted dog express your character? Can any thing or any creature below your own humanity reveal the essential truth of your spirit? Can any order of things, can any race of creatures, declare about you what your lovely child can declare? If you are to reach your friend by means of another, here is your Mediator. Here is the child that has lived in your mind, seen the honor of your conscience, rejoiced in the love of your heart, grown strong under the might of your character. That receptive, responsive, obedient, happy child can represent you to your guest. That child can reveal your thought, interpret your honor, express your love, utter your strength and dignity. In that gracious filial revelation your guest beholds your soul. This universe is God's house. It is ordered in an infinite profusion of great and beautiful things. It is crowded with countless races of living creatures. The things and the creatures may tell us wonderful stories about the house whose builder and maker is God. But the soul of our Eternal host, the inmost character of the Infinite, can be told to man only by man. Only the men who live in the thought of God, who behold the moral integrity of God, who dwell in the consciousness of his loving-kindness, who

rise up into strength under the inspiration of his spirit, — only they can reveal the intellect, the conscience, the heart, the deep soul, the eternal humanity of our God. God speaks in the stone, but not to it; God declares himself in the animal world, but not to it; God reveals his soul in man, and He reveals it to man through man.

Think of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. That wild road has little to say about the God and Father of men. The robber who beats the wayfarer, strips him, and leaves him half dead, seems a not too severe representative of the wild and pitiless nature that looks upon him in his distress. The priest and the Levite again remind him of the utter sphinx-like indifference of the cosmos to man's need and man's agony. The good Samaritan changes the horror into joy. He speaks and acts for something in the universe like himself, but infinitely higher. In that wild path, in that tragic scene, he is the only speaker for the God of love. That lonely and perilous road is the path of mankind from the cradle to the grave. There is no God in this modern descent from Jerusalem to Jericho till the good Samaritan comes upon the scene. Our good Samaritan undoes the atheism of limited and helpless nature, the atheism of the brutal robber, the

atheism of the scornful and indifferent priest and Levite. He reveals through his own just and humane soul the just and humane soul of God.

Here we see the central meaning of the career of Jesus. Jesus stands for a method of revelation and its ideal use. The supreme path of God is through the humanity of Jesus; the perfect humanity of Jesus supplies the ideal path. This is the heart of the Gospel. God who in sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us in his son. The humanity of the prophets leads to the humanity of Jesus, as the foot-hills lead to ever higher ranges till the sovereign summit is at last reached. The path to God has ever been to man through man. Jesus takes this universal and immemorial method of God in speaking to men, lifts it to an ideal use in his own career, bequeaths it to his disciples, and calls upon them to become, as he had been, the light of the world.

Think of the splendor of our humanity according to this faith. We speak of the cathedral window. We speak of its richness in color, of its variety and majesty in figure. But the window is only glass, made of sand and seaweed, dust and ashes, lifted into coherence, curiously wrought, yet with one great redeeming capacity.

It is so made as to become a prism for the light. In the unfolded glory of the light it lives; in that unfolded glory it glows and burns with its hundred fires and hues. In the light whose heart it opens there is the distinction and dignity of its existence. That is humanity. It is of the earth earthy. It is made of flesh and blood. It is of the animal order, but not wholly so. It is born to die, and yet it holds within itself a transcendent capacity. It stands in the great flood of light that falls from the Creator upon his universe. It becomes the prism for that light. What is but pale common light as it falls upon things and upon creatures, becomes in man the ruby of love, the gold of truth, the blue of an eternal tenderness, the thousand glorious colors and gracious tints of the heart of our God who is the Father of lights. To stand in God as the window stands in the sunlight, to reveal God in our moral character as the window reveals the light, here is the mission, here is the splendor, of man.

There is, however, a solemn side to this privilege. Where there is no sense of God, it is not the cosmos, it is not the wild beast, that is to blame; it is the man who has become as mechanical as the cosmos, as merciless as the wild beast. For the revelation of the moral Deity the cosmos was not commissioned, the wild beast was not

sent. The human soul alone can give us the human God. And where man fails in love, God fails in revelation. Usually, therefore, atheism and lovelessness go together. The loveless heart sees in itself no evidence of God; the loveless heart in a pitiless society sees no evidence anywhere of a Father in heaven. Should love and pity die out of humanity, all high evidence of God's being will also die out of humanity's thought. Oh, the atheisms that are due to the failure of men in kindness one to another, to the failure of men in their own love and pity to suggest, to reveal, the love and pity of God! Deal justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with thy God. Justice comes first, not because it is the more fundamental excellence, but because it opens the door into the temple in which it is transfigured. Kindness comes second, not because it is inferior to justice, but because it is nearer to God, because it makes human rectitude a finer thing, and fits it for the utterance of God made possible through fellowship with God.

Here is the solemn lesson to the Church. The Church is a society of Jesus. It is a society formed for the expression of the spirit of Jesus, that the sense of the God and Father of Jesus Christ may continue in the world. The world cries, "Where is thy God?" What does that cry mean? It is a demand upon the Church. It

asks, Where is your spiritual mind, your enlightened conscience, your sympathy, your compassion? Where is your enduring kindness? Where are your good deeds, your devout and devoted lives? Only through these can we keep God for ourselves; only through these can we give the sense of God to the world. The only availing evidence for a spiritual God is the spiritual life of the children of God; the only adequate witness for the humanity of God is the kindness of those who believe in Him.

Our world is a kind of colossal feudal castle. It is in its substance matter ordered, matter built into form, stone and lime wrought into a vast structure, holding within itself indeed the design of its Maker, but providing at first only chinks and holes and no windows for the Eternal light, the Infinite spirit who is other and more than the realm of nature. In this natural world we build a human world. On this colossal feudal castle our Master built the tower that stands forever in the open day. Thither men go up for the vision of God. The true disciples of Jesus open windows in the great structure; the succession of disciples means a succession of windows. The issue of this succession is man in the revealing power of his humanity standing in the heart of nature; the old castle thus becomes the enduring framework for the countless windows

that have been set in it. The order of the cosmos is the frame for a new and a translucent humanity. Human goodness is the terrestrial prophet of the goodness of God.

But if goodness builds windows through which God may shine upon men, wickedness, inhumanity, puts in the place of the window the wall of stone. Here one sees the tremendousness of an unkind life. It shuts God out of the world. It reduces man to the level of the cosmos. The mechanism and the pitilessness of physical nature claim and consume our humanity as the lean kine in Pharaoh's dream devoured the fat kine. And when the distinctive world of man is gone, God is gone; when you have destroyed the army of finite lovers, you have banished the Infinite lover; when you have degraded man to the level of the animal, you have abandoned the hope of a translucent society turned toward the Eternal light, you have broken all the windows in your colossal feudal castle, you have filled the vacant spaces with the opaque and unrevealing stone. The hope of a continuous witness for the Eternal love stands or falls with the hope of a race putting itself more and more under the dominion of love. The society of lovers is the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God is the great human witness for God.

IV

PERSONALITY AND THE TRUTH

"Jesus saith unto him, I am . . . the truth."
John xiv, 6.

THE deepest question ever put to Jesus was put by Pontius Pilate. Even if he did not stay for an answer, even if he spoke in jest, Pilate, when he framed his great question, became for one supreme moment the representative of humanity. And it is profoundly interesting that not from a Jew, nor from a Greek, not from a believer in special revelation, nor from an upholder of the insight of reason, but from a Roman politician came the great demand: What is truth? That the demand is a human demand appears with extraordinary impressiveness when we see it issuing from the damaged humanity of a man like Pilate. We are not surprised when we hear Job sighing: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" We expect the just and the good to seek after God. When we hear the same vast sigh upon the lips of weak and sinful men, we are amazed. Nicodemus the Pharisee and Zaccheus the publican both seek Jesus; they seek him that they may find the Highest. Facts like

these lead us to a deeper knowledge of man. They compel us to believe that our race in its error and sorrow is in movement upon great ends, that it is, oftenest indeed by the path of tragic mistake, in quest of God. We cannot deny this when before our eyes, out of the mire of a vulgar and vicious life there bursts the fountain of clear aspiration. "My soul is athirst for God." That is the habitual language of the saint; in supreme moments, that is the language of the depraved heart. Augustine, when he had won his freedom, did little more than repeat with new emphasis and with happier feelings the great discovery made in his bondage: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee."

Something of the same kind of surprise is felt when we hear the ageless questions of philosophy upon the lips of children and youth, when we hear them in the words of men of the world. And this surprise is keenest when, as in the case of Pilate, the profoundest demand issues from a mind wanting in seriousness, in nobility, and in depth. It is the image of the sun that gives to the dewdrop its lustre; it is the seriousness of human existence that gives dignity to Pilate. Even unworthy men stand to their race as the æolian harp to the wind. The poor crude nature, in moments of high visitation,

gives utterance to the still sad music of humanity. Was not Saul among the prophets, and Balaam? A crisis in the history of a worthless character lifts it into an interpreter of universal human need. The crisis in Pilate's life makes him for one moment the representative of man.

We are not unfamiliar with the idea that truth and goodness belong together. That gospel was preached by a Greek philosopher four centuries before our era began. That great soul contended that no one sins with his will. He held that the fountain of evil is tragic mistake, that men do wrong because they are ignorant. He declared that if they only knew the things that pertain to their peace, they would love righteousness and pursue it. And we have come to look upon this contention of the ancient seer as one of the great commonplaces of the spiritual life. Truth as wisdom and wisdom as truth are found nowhere except in the ways of honor; in the paths of shame we meet only endless and hopeless error. So preach both the ancient Greek and the ancient Hebrew seer.

But in the words of Jesus, which I have taken as my text, there is something more than this. Jesus says: "I am the truth." What does he mean? What is truth? In considering this question, let us move toward the sublime answer

of Jesus through forms of expression with which we are familiar.

1. We sometimes speak of truth as agreement of word with fact. We say that the tide is at the flood, that the day is at the morn, that the year is at the spring. Each of these statements is susceptible of comparison with fact. If what is said agrees with what is, there is the truth.

Let us suppose that we are the witnesses of certain occurrences. A horse runs away on the Speedway and no harm is done; a lion breaks out from the menagerie, leaps over a fence into a playground full of children and nurses, and no one is frightened; a great building twenty stories high is on fire, all the occupants get out in safety, and although the entire building is destroyed, the contents of it are saved; a pleasure yacht sails down Niagara River and over the Falls with no other discomfort than the sense of a rather heavy jolt in making the leap of the cataract; the politicians of all parties meet and declare their enmity with one another upon every point of public policy, in terms of universal benevolence; these politicians further declare that the doctrine that to the victors belong the spoils is in harmony with the severest civil service reform. These are the reports; they may or they may not be easy of belief. If, however, they corre-

spond with the facts, they are true; if they do not correspond with the facts, they are not true.

Here truth means accuracy, and the great lesson is plain. An inaccurate mind is a dangerous possession, and may easily enough become a calamity. It is true that the absurdly inaccurate mind has for mankind an unfailing charm, and it is turned by the miraculous touch of humor into a servant of life. Of a host of inaccuracies and exaggerations it may be said that they are simply ludicrous; they are nourishment for laughter. Their name is legion, and yet they may be recalled by the famous report concerning a prisoner who was sentenced to four months in the "House of Commons."

The thing to be dreaded is the habit of inaccuracy in serious affairs. When the fact is the signal to stop to the engineer of an express, the identification of a coast light or headland by the master of a ship, the exact reading of a physician's prescription by a chemist, the discernment of the path of the knife in the case of the surgeon, we see at once the indispensableness of accuracy. When we think of the banking transactions of the country and regard them as an instance in illustration of the world of trade, we again see the essentialness of accuracy. When we visit our public schools and consider the subjects taught and the methods of teaching

employed, we can think of no higher human necessity than the habit of an exact mind.

Think what the habit of mental exactness would do for knowledge; how it would dissolve the vast compound of fact and fancy, truth and superstition, that in every department of human interest goes forth under the august name of knowledge; how this habit of exactness would generate in human beings the love of science. Science means exact observation, and exact judgment upon the things observed. Think how this habit would aid the process of civil justice. Few witnesses mean to lie; vast numbers of them are incompetent. Think how this habit would put an end to gossip. The accurate mind will refuse to repeat as fact what it knows to be only rumor, and it will refuse to aid in that circulation of rumor by which the mere guess of the gossip attains to baleful certainty. On his death-bed, John C. Calhoun said of Daniel Webster, his great antagonist in constitutional law: "Show him a fact in the path of his argument, and Mr. Webster is dumb." There could not be a higher witness to intellectual integrity. The fine thing about the guest who appeared without the wedding garment was that when confronted by the fact, he was speechless.

How much damage to human feeling may come from the inaccuracy of man may be readily im-

agined. "There came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Now suppose these three messengers mistaken! They have caused by their blunder needless and nameless pain. Worlds of needless and nameless pain are rolled every day upon poor suffering mortals by the wretched inaccuracies and exaggerations of men and women.

Our Gospel is a report; is it an essentially accurate report? That question has roused and inflamed the intelligence of the world. In this day of universal and unsparing criticism, nothing that is inexact can stand. The modern world has set its heart upon accuracy. It is subjecting to

the severest tests the inherited intellectual possessions of mankind; it is subjecting religions and the records of religions to the severest examination; it is subjecting Christianity and the records of Christianity to the severest critical process. The modern world has come to believe with Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living. It is therefore of infinite moment that the records of Christianity shall prove essentially accurate. It is the belief of those who know most on this point that the Christian record is substantially sound; the reporters of Jesus were essentially accurate men; what they said abides after all the waves and billows of criticism have gone over it, because it is at heart a record of fact. There could not be a more impressive example of the peril of inaccuracy, or of the exceeding felicity of an accurate mind. In the light of it we can approve the sentence passed upon the London publisher who issued the Bible with the negatives left out in the Ten Commandments. His work was destroyed and he was sent to the Tower, not only for sacrilege, but also for inaccuracy.

2. We sometimes speak of the truth as agreement of statement and thought. The comparison here is between what a man puts into words and what he holds in his heart. We recall here the exclamation of the Homeric hero: "I hate as

the gates of hell the man who says one thing with his lips and conceals another in his heart." That is to the Homeric hero the ideal of an untrue man; one whose words are in dead antagonism to the thoughts and intents of his heart. We recall the Old Testament story of the treachery of Joab to Amasa: "And Joab said to Amasa, Is it well with thee, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand." Under the pretense of the most loyal friendship, Joab killed this man. The outward act was the act of a friend; the inward thought was the thought of an assassin. Judas comes to the Garden of Gethsemane to betray Jesus. He has given a sign to the enemies of Jesus, who are not familiar with his personal appearance; the man whom Judas shall kiss they are to apprehend, that man is their prisoner. Judas kept his promise, and as he advanced, Jesus recoiled from him with horror: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Dost thou employ the symbol of love as the cover for treason? Thou appearest in conduct as my devoted friend; in thought, in feeling, in premeditated deed, thou art my betrayer. And in all history there is nothing more odious than that. Here is lying reduced to a fine art; falsehood taking the

utmost pains to conceal its hideous features; treachery stealing the livery of heaven. This awful contradiction, this black and hideous antithesis between the act and the mind of Judas, stands as the monumental lie of human history. Under it are gathered the unspeakable infidelities of domestic life, the glaring dishonesties of trade, the vile hypocrisies of social fellowship, the nameless corruptions that pollute the great word "patriotism," and the historic international treacheries against an afflicted humanity.

We say of a poem, of a speech, of a philosophy, that it is true when it answers to the thoughts and feelings of the poet, the orator, the philosopher. Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is true because it is the genuine utterance of genuine feeling. Milton's "Samson Agonistes" is true because it is a faithful expression of Milton's mood at the time. Dante's "Divine Comedy" is true because he put his sincerest beliefs and convictions into this poem. Demosthenes, when he spoke against Philip, Burke, when he pleaded for conciliation with America, and Webster, when he expounded the Constitution, spoke the truth; that is, they spoke their sincerest thoughts and beliefs. Hume and Kant are true philosophers because they both put in order their profoundest and most serious conclusions; there is no contradiction, no discord,

between the thought in mind and the thought in the book.

Here the great lesson is sincerity, and in sincerity we touch another of the fountains of a true humanity. Indeed, without sincerity, great character is impossible. What are all our orthodoxies, if they do not represent the mind of the Church to-day? They are a vast construction of falsehood. What are all the great historic forms of faith in dogma, in hymn, in sacred oracle, in philosophic system, in the free utterance of literature, if the spirit of to-day is not in accord with them? David found that Saul's armor did not fit him, and therefore he refused to wear it. He went forth against the great enemy of Israel with the sling of the shepherd and the five smooth stones from the brook. It is of infinite moment that we should fight for the highest in this way. The first of all questions concerns what one holds in his heart as the truth. He must stand by that and by nothing else. It may be but a beam in the darkness; if he is true to it, it will grow.

Men conceal their real thought for many reasons. They conceal their real thought because the free expression of it may injure their prospects; or because it may give offense to friends; or because of personal weakness. These and all other reasons for the suppression of individual judgments are unworthy. The thoughts and in-

tents of the heart are suppressed oftenest on account of weakness and dishonesty. The classic instance of suppression of judgment through weakness is Shakespeare's: —

"H. Do you see yonder cloud that 's almost in shape of a camel?
P. By the mass, and 't is like a camel, indeed.
H. Methinks it is like a weasel.
P. It is backed like a weasel.
H. Or like a whale?
P. Very like a whale."

An example of the suppression of real opinion likely to become classic is found in Kipling's "The Truce of the Bear." On the one hand we have a Hague Convention for peace, and on the other an imperial policy of national aggrandizement supported by armed force. The hunter comes upon the bear: —

"There was a charge in the musket — pricked and primed was the pan —
My finger crooked on the trigger — when he reared up like a man.
. . . . . .
And my heart was touched with pity for the monstrous, pleading thing.
Touched with pity and wonder, I did not fire then. . . .
I have looked no more on women — I have walked no more with men.
Nearer he tottered and nearer, with paws like hands that pray —
From brow to jaw the steel-shod paw, it ripped my face away!

Sudden, silent, and savage, searing as flame the blow —
Faceless I fell before his feet, fifty summers ago.
I heard him grunt and chuckle — I heard him pass to his den.
He left me blind to the darkened years and the little mercy of men."

3. We sometimes remark that truth is the agreement of thought and fact. The mind of Copernicus is dominated by a certain image of the solar system. In the mind of this great man the sun is at the centre of the system, and the earth and its sister planets move in separate orbits and in nearer or remoter circles round the sun. This is the picture in the brain of Copernicus, and we believe that it answers to the solar fact. The mind of Darwin is controlled by the idea of the development from one kind of life of all the manifold varieties of existence now on this earth. The image is of an inverted pyramid, self-generating, self-building, spreading as it rises into the vast contrast which the base of this mighty inverted pyramid presents to its apex. This is the thought in the mind of Darwin, and many believe that it answers substantially to the biological fact. There is the history of Rome for fifteen hundred years, and there is Gibbon's mental picture of that history which he transfers to his book; there is the Republic of Plato and the moral and social constitution of man; there is the total moral order of the universe and

the mind of Christ. Where the mental picture and the natural fact, the human insight and the moral order, the state of the mind and the state of the case, the interior world of thought and the exterior world of nature, agree, there we say is the truth. When you read the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, when you see how the owner in each case seeks his own and will not cease to seek it until he find it, and then learn that this is the feeling of Jesus toward erring humanity, you are ready for the question, Is this the way that God feels and acts toward men? If this is the case, the parable is true; it is an image in essential agreement with the mind and heart of God. When you read further our Lord's parable of Dives and Lazarus, when you see the noble beggar after death in bliss and the royal rascal in torment; when you ask if this represents the division of the good and the bad into separate worlds at death, into heaven and hell, you are ready for the question, Is this parable in essential accord with the fact? If things there answer to this picture, then the parable is true. So we may reason of all perceptions, memories, imaginations, judgments, beliefs, and hopes; if they agree with the independent order beyond them, they are true, if they do not agree with that order, they are false.

Here truth means reality, independent of the will of man. Sincerity is essential, but it is not enough. There is an order of nature independent of human volition. Man can observe times and seasons, days and years; but he cannot control them. The world of science is infinitely fruitful because it is the perception of the world of nature; the teaching of Jesus is infinitely fruitful because it is the revelation of the moral world of man. One's thoughts, fancies, feelings, volitions, may be sincere; the whole state of one's mind and the entire intent and content of one's heart may be without guile, but this will not save one, if one is not in accord with the order of the world. The law of gravitation is independent of man; it exists, it operates, it rewards life and destroys life, whether perceived or unperceived, acknowledged or unacknowledged. The somnambulist who walks out of his window on the fourth story of his house meets the same fate with the deliberate suicide. Cyanide of potassium will kill the man who takes it by mistake as quickly as the man who takes it knowing what it is. There is a physical order that we do not make, and that we cannot unmake.

Parallel to this is the independent moral order. There is the cosmic nature and its law of gravitation that must be honored; there is the human

nature and its moral law that must be honored. It is there by the decree of the Highest, and no weapon formed against it can prosper. The Lord's parable of the Two Builders touches life here. The foolish builder was as sincere as the wise builder; he, too, wanted life, home, a safe dwelling, for the rich content of existence. He built sincerely, but he did not build in accordance with the moral order. He forgot that he lived in a searching universe; he forgot that a covenant with the everlasting alone can save man. He made no provision against the rains that descended, the floods that came, and the winds that blew. His house fell, not because it was insincerely, but because it was foolishly built; not because it was an evil device, but because it was not founded on reality.

Carlyle speaks of "a soul too much based upon laughter." We cannot too often remind ourselves that we live in a universe of the utmost seriousness; that law in the realm of nature and in the sphere of the spirit is ultimate and implacable; that good intentions cannot bring immunity from disaster, that, indeed, as the great poet saw, hell is paved with them; that only the reverent and devout recognition of the independent and inviolable order of God without and within can give to a man a fruitful, progressive and secure existence.

4. We sometimes speak of the truth under the form of personality. We speak of the true father, the true mother, the true friend, the true man. What do we mean? We mean that a given person stands in a definite number of relations to his fellow men, and that in these relations he is invariably all that he should be, or he is in them in a very eminent degree what he should be. We look at an American like Abraham Lincoln, we mark him as son, father, friend, as lawyer, statesman, President, and we can say from the heart that in all these relations he is in an extraordinary degree what he should be; he is a true man.

This is the meaning of Jesus in the text. The truth is not a system of opinion; it is a system of relations, and a man in them all that he should be. Jesus is son, brother, teacher, friend, citizen of Israel, servant of his people, prophet of God. This is the circle of relations in which he lives; in them all he is all that he should be. He is the perfect man, and therefore he is the final form of the truth.

Look now at some of the implications of this view of truth. According to this conception of truth, the sovereign force in the world is the personal soul; man is the ultimate reality in time. Color is but his vision; sound is but his sensation; taste and smell are but his experiences;

the world upon which he builds and works and walks is but some Sovereign Will answering to his own. In the heart of this Will he lives; within that Will all men and all things live. Yet in that Will the central reality known to us is the human soul. The world as vision, sound, taste, smell, touch, is carried on by the perennial race; otherwise it would vanish when the soul vanishes at death, like the baseless fabric of a vision. The world as we know it is kept in being by man; and what in it is more than man is but the Sovereign Will that answers to man's will.

The soul that perceives, that remembers, that weaves its thoughts into strange devices, that reasons, that finds in itself the moral ideal, that is bound by that ideal to service and love, is the sovereign reality in this world of shadows. The capacity for discovering an ideal, for lifting it higher and ever higher, is among the great things in the human spirit. The incapacity for evading the sense of obligation when standing in any relation under the full light of the ideal, is among the greater things of the soul. The power by which the heavenly vision is entertained, pursued, overtaken, and put into the obedient will, the thankful heart, the well-ordered and beneficent life, is the greatest thing in man, and it is the greatest thing that we know. When we hear the Hebrew servant cry, How can I do this great sin

against God? we see youth possessed of a moral ideal, and we see that ideal sovereign in the will and conduct of its possessor. When we hear from the lips of the Christian apostle: "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward unto the things that are before, I press on toward the prize of the high calling in Christ," we see a soul pursuing a flying ideal as an eagle might fly in the fiery path of the retreating sun. The man is in movement through love and service offered to an infinite ideal.

If we turn and look at the souls that have failed in obedience, at Judas in his remorse, at Peter in his tears, at Pilate washing his hands, at Richard Third alone in his tent the night before the battle, at Lady Macbeth and the spots upon her hands, at the volcanic woe of the conscience face to face with its own shame, we learn again how profound, how abysmal, is the reality of the moral nature of man.

> "Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
> And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
> To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

If we look at man in his sense of moral need, we see again how trivial all other things are compared with the reality of the soul. Look over the world, look into the hearts of suffering men and

women, look into the conscience crazed with the sense of unworthiness and shame, and listen to the great modern interpreter of a moral humanity as he puts into words the terrible, inarticulate moan: —

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart?"

If to himself each man is the centre of all reality, next to this is the reality of his fellow men. We live in personal relations. We are souls, thinking, feeling, and acting one with another. We are moral realities, conscious spiritual forces, either at war with one another or at peace. Next to himself, man is to his brother the sovereign reality in the world. If he thinks honorably of his brother, if he feels kindly toward him, if he deals justly by him, his brother's soul comes to his with messages of joy and peace. See how these souls come to Jesus. They come out of the past. Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration are symbols of the grateful dead that flock to Jesus to bless him. The sad, defeated, broken-hearted past becomes victorious and glad in him. They rise at his side; the souls of little children, of weary

mothers, of publicans and sinners, of broken households that he has restored, all pour upon him their reverence and their gratitude. They come to his prophetic soul from the vast future. Millions of unborn spirits fly like doves to their windows, to empty into his the sacred thankfulness of their lives. Thus, in his measure, the true man always fares. He is alone and yet not alone; he reveres and serves the souls of men. The souls of men in one way or another testify to him who serves them their august reality. They testify by their gratitude and their most sacred trust. And if a man deals unjustly by man, how terrible the curse! Robespierre's way to the guillotine is accompanied by the terrific imprecation: "Go down to hell with the curses of all wives and mothers." That cry of wild justice is a symbol of the scourging reality that man's brother becomes to him when he has outraged his brother's humanity. His punishment is harder than he can bear; the blood of the slain soul cried to the Infinite out of the ground. Both in benediction and in malediction we learn that we are persons in a vast moral fellowship, and that souls in moral fellowship are the ultimate reality of our world.

We deal with our fellow men, and we deal with the Infinite. When we are at the height of moral being we whisper in profoundest awe: —

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me."

The Eternal is intelligible only as an "I," a personal Soul, a Being who entertains an infinite moral ideal, who has for it an infinite love, and who gives to it in his character an infinite fulfillment. Further, when we are at our best, the great realities of the universe are not atoms, nor elements, nor the combinations of atoms and elements that form things and stars and constellations, nor the vast aggregate of these that constitute the material universe as it lives in the vision and science of man; when we are at our best, the supreme realities are souls in fellowship for better and for worse, through weal and through woe, and in fellowship with the Eternal Soul that we call God. When we think clearly and at our best, the permanent core of the universe discloses itself as a fellowship of persons in the order of conscience and love, in the pervading presence and the comprehending being of the Eternal conscience and love.

Jesus therefore spoke honestly and profoundly when he said, "I am the truth." Truth as ac-

curacy lived in him; never man so ordered his words to the facts of existence. Truth as sincerity lived in him; never man so moulded speech into the image of his thought. Truth as independent reality he confessed; never man so recognized beyond him, about him, and above him the will of God. All these forms of truth were lifted into the ultimate and supreme form, — the personal soul. He stood to men in manifold relations, and in them all he stood just and merciful. He stood to God as Son, and he stood as the perfect Son. He acknowledged in the comfort of those who returned upon him for his services to them their thankful love and trust, and in the blind and brutal hatred of those who filled him with grief, the reality of the souls of his brethren. In his obedience and in his victory he knew and declared the reality of God. In his transcendent personal soul he is in time the truth of our human world, he is in time the truth of the universe. Henceforth, when we use the great word "truth," we shall not dwell among things or words or thoughts; we shall rise to the sphere of character; we shall look upon the face of saint, reformer, martyr, hero; we shall apply the word to the soul that has stood in human relations for the highest. When we use the sublime phrase "the truth," we shall lift our vision to the perfect person, to the soul

that stood toward men and toward God in ideal justice and love, and in an ideal service of justice and love; and we shall look up through this divine personal mediator who is the truth of our human world to the personal God who is the truth of the universe.

V

NATURE AND HUMANITY

"And Jacob's well was there."
John iv, 6.

THE well was there, a fountain from the heart of the earth, clear, abundant, beautiful, fit to represent nature in the whole range of its beneficent ministry to life. The grand total of forces other than human that we call nature lifts itself into the imagination as we think of this ancient well, as we sit beside it weary with the journey of existence and under the heat and burden of the day.

This well, however, is not isolated and independent. It is not a nameless fountain. It is Jacob's well. It was dug by the father of a nation. The water is still held in the place that he made for it. It has an association with his career, ancient, pathetic, continuous, endless. Rachel in her beauty visits that well. The sons of Jacob, in youthful gladness and manly hope, gather round it every morning and evening. The flocks and herds come near it. The old man, in his shame and in his love, in his often unworthy and yet always strangely fascinating charac-

ter, has stamped his humanity upon the well that bears his name. Nature comes before us in that well; humanity comes before us in it. Humanity rebuilds the well, uses it, bequeaths it, through it enters into covenant with nature, and sets in the heart of nature's abiding order the fortunes of the human race.

The Ampezzo valley in the Austrian Tyrol is a modern picture with the same meaning. Encircling the valley there are the enduring mountains. They are something in themselves. They were there before man; they are primeval, everlasting. They surround and watch over the valley. Among their high places the clouds gather, blacken, and almost daily break in storms that drive as if they would destroy and desolate, but that only refresh and beautify the world upon which their fury is spent. Into this frowning and terrible order, touched with high restraint, is set man and his world. Nature begins to burn with humanity; humanity begins to covenant with and to go beyond nature. The green fields sweeping up the valley from the river-banks to the edges of the eternal rock, the response of the soil to the skillful and laborious hand of man, the human habitations that tell of man's triumph over heat and cold, the little village that speaks of the power of social fellowship, the church with its campanile in the centre

of all that testifies of the thirst of the soul after the living God, — all repeat the same wonderful story, the obligation of man to nature, the obligation of nature to man, and his complete transcendence of nature in the range of his powers, in the vastness of his needs, in the purpose of his being, and in the consciousness of his union with God. In that valley, as in many another, we see the humanizing of all nature, the place of man in nature's stern order, and the spirit that on river and sea, on hill and plain, is forever an alien, creative, prophetic, alive with the moral image of God, and living up into his eternal life. I am to speak, therefore, of nature and humanity, at a few of their thousand points of intersection.

1. There is first the dependence of nature upon man, and of man upon nature. Without man, what a strange ghost nature becomes! We know that colors, sounds, tastes, and smells are due to human sensibility. We further know that hardness and softness, cold and heat, moist and dry, owe their character to our peculiar human organization. When you strip from nature all that it is in consequence of its association with man, it is left as constant, invisible, sublime, eternal order, and no more. This is the boundless unsheeted ghost, the infinite sightless and impalpable order in which we live. When we take man out of nature, the outgoings of the morning

and the evening are no more; the glorious miracle of color is gone; the sounds that are the sphere melodies, the tastes that are zest to life, the freshness and the perfume of the rich earth, are vanished. We have left as nature, when man is gone, only the aboriginal, formless, viewless, eternal power.

On the other hand, man apart from nature is helpless. He cannot breathe except in nature's air; he cannot move except in her spaces; he cannot subsist except on the food that she brings him; he cannot appear to his brethren except in a body that has been built up out of her deep, mysterious stores. Apart from nature man dies, passes out of the fair world of time, leaves the smile of love behind him, ceases to speak to his brethren in the color and sound, in the whole varied and wondrous sensuous appeal of his kind, falls out of the ranks of visible human fellowship, withdraws into the world of spirit, fades into the eternal, dwells with God, and, until we join him there, exists only for God.

Again, nature comes to her best through man. The well is nature at her best at a single point. That eminence is bestowed by man. The story of the Garden of Eden is another illustration. Nature is improved by man's hand, improved in range and excellence of life, in richness and diversity of beauty. By the hand of man the

wilderness and the solitary place are made to rejoice. The hillsides of Italy and Switzerland, and the valley of the Nile, tell the story of the whole earth. Man's ideas and man's toil and man's life bring nature to her best. The wild rose is fair, but it is not to be compared for richness and beauty with the same flower lifted to perfection by man's care. So with fruits of every name. The landscape architect comes into nature with man. Even the ranges of nature untouched by man, inaccessible to man, are yet lifted into greater sublimity because they are in association with man, because they are part of man's world. It is doubtless true that

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society, where none intrudes,
> By the deep Sea, and music in its roar."

And yet the singing poet, it is easy to see, carries these great things in nature to their best. He gives them a voice; he supplies them with new power; he lifts them into an ampler and nobler life.

It hardly needs to be said that man rises in civilization through his insight into nature. Take all the knowledge of nature which civilized man possesses, all his skill in using nature's power, all the discoveries of nature's secret stores, and all the inventions that extend human

control over these stores, and you have done much to explain his vast advance over savage man. This is so true that the man who first became fully aware of it won an endless fame. Bacon is simply the literary prophet of physical science. His distinction is in his vision, and in the rich magnificence of his utterance. His vision is narrow, indeed, compared with that of the great ruling thinkers of the race. In extent and in value, Bacon's vision is immeasurably inferior to that of Plato and Aristotle, upon whom he never lost an excuse to pour his contempt. One thing, however, Bacon saw with surpassing clearness. He stood with his eyes turned earthward. He beheld the amazing possible service of physical things to the human race. He prophesied throughout his long career of the untold utility for man in the heart of nature. He put himself, his vision, his prophecy, and his passion into the modern mind. The consequence is an unparalleled devotion to nature, an unparalleled conquest over nature, and an unparalleled advance in the whole existence of civilized man. For his vision of this promised land, for his power to captivate the mind of man with his vision, Bacon has won his renown. Nothing could more clearly attest the truth of the remark that conquest over nature means for man the power of civilization.

2. Thus we may speak of nature in man, and of humanity in nature. Man shows everywhere the marks of his temporal environment. His greatest thoughts have a provincial air about them. When he uses words, he employs sounds that ring with the suggestions of time and space. When he speaks of God as Father, he borrows a word from human society that carries in it worlds of high meaning and round it huge clouds of infirmity and sorrow. The word even drags up with it the associations of the animal origin of man. We speak of eternal love, and the great conception comes like the sun, but like the sun blazing a path for itself through the shadows of night; it comes with associations of fleshly origin, sentimental meanings, mixed character, wide-reaching and doubtful report. We speak of the kingdom of love, and that word kingdom is unable to free itself from suggestions of the oppressions that have cursed mankind. We speak of the moral order, and again the associations of law, custom, immemorial usage, sometimes good, sometimes evil, always far enough from ideal, cling to the august conception. Again the treasure is in the earthen vessel, again the vast idea is exposed to meanness and confusion by its temporal expression. Thus it is with heaven, one of our greatest and most consoling thoughts. It is in vain that we call it the world of spirit, the

sphere of perfected moral service and fellowship, the realm where in full and happy consciousness just men live and move and have their being in God. Thus exalted, thus held aloof from our experience here, the great and beautiful thought becomes vague, insubstantial, powerless. It must die to live. It must put on a body of humiliation. It must clothe itself in metaphor. It must glow and burn in the fires of time. It must become our Father's house of many mansions, a sublime repetition of the fairest of human homes. And as the midnight sky in the lake is but an image of the starry vault above it, so, and conversely, our heaven must become another, ampler, holier, diviner earth, a vast and glorified picture hung in eternity of our life in time, — a holy city, a new Jerusalem, a place where they need no light of the sun nor of the moon, where the Lord God is himself the light, a world where the anthem is that of a company that no man can number, the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings. The tumult of time, the endless multitudes of believing, purified souls lifted out of pain, glorified in the eternal, that is the form which our thought of heaven must put on. All our greatest thoughts must follow the example of Christ: they must lay aside their native superhuman glory. As far as pure intellectual form is concerned, they must make themselves of no reputation. They must

descend upon man through images and associations that have power over man. They must assume the character of a servant; they must become obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. In return for this limitation upon our highest thoughts, this humiliation of our sublimest conceptions, there is wrought the exaltation of humanity, the sovereignty of man, under God, over the interests that belong to man.

Under the same law stands our rational and moral character. Our thinking is done at lucid intervals. We vegetate. Our food must be digested, and that process arrests thought; we must sleep, we must play, we must attend to the business of living. Physical existence is a constant and harassing problem. Our thinking is done under these limitations. It is broken, patched, rolled in all the associations of our temporal existence. And when we attain to moments of freedom, how few and how fleeting these moments are! An immortal moment, an ineffable hour, a heavenly vision, a pure glance into the soul of the universe, a prayer, a song, and then the return of the cloud, then back again to the wheel of fire. Aristotle's idea of blessedness, for God, was pure, continuous, untroubled, eternal vision; and for man, those high moments when he could share that beatific vision.

Not only as thinkers, but also as doers of the

will of God we suffer here. We work for righteousness in time and space, we work in our generation and in our small neighborhood. We serve the cause of justice as hewers of wood and drawers of water, as food producers and transporters, as buyers and sellers, as battling with winds and storms in all the mean and small business of the world. Our ideals are set, like the stars, "in the black bosom of night." The character that we win, like the food upon which we live, is gathered in the fields of time. And again, we must not push too hard; otherwise we shall defeat the high purpose of the soul. Insanity comes through vice and crime, through selfishness and shame; it comes, too, through all forms of ignorance. It comes through unwise religious passion. We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. The marks of nature, obstinate, unconquerable, mysterious, are upon our whole human existence in this world.

On the other side, if nature limits man, man gives to nature a meaning not her own. For uncounted ages she has been in closest association with man. She is thus steeped in humanity. Look into the Bible for examples. Is it nature as mountain? There are Mount Moriah and Abraham, Nebo and Moses, Carmel and Elijah, Tabor, Calvary, Olivet and Jesus. Is it the sea? Jesus and Galilee, Paul and the Mediterranean,

are in endless association. Is it the river? The Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Jordan, Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, are again full of human color and character. Is it the sun? The outgoings of the morning and the evening are dyed in the humanity that has watched with immemorial admiration this double diurnal miracle of splendor. Is it the starry sky? Job, and the millions whom he represents, look up and note Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades; look up and fill those bright and peaceful worlds with the pathos and the aspiration of human hearts. The poet's song, called secular only by those who see nothing to revere in human love, represents the association of man with the whole realm of nature: —

> "I see her in the dewy flowers —
> I see her sweet and fair.
> I hear her in the tunefu' birds —
> I hear her charm the air.
> There 's not a bonie flower that springs
> By fountain, shaw, or green,
> There 's not a bonie bird that sings,
> But minds me o' my Jean."

Every object in nature is thus touched with fresh meaning through association with human love. Take the river. It flows on to-day as if it had just begun; think of the ages of its life. In its source there is the inevitable suggestion of the beginnings of man in mystery and in weakness.

In its swift, ceaseless movement there is the image of the unresting, everlasting generations of men. In its murmur there is the intonation of humanity in its love and grief, in its victory and defeat, in its weariness and hope ; the sound of the river is the voice of the countless thousands who have lived upon its banks, who in its clear and calm current have found the mirror of their happiness and peace, who in its wild and dark floods have beheld an image of their passionate and tumultuous lives. Oh, the pathos of that ongoing, whispering, singing, moaning river ! The heart-beats, the heart-breaks, the morning songs, and the unsilenceable hopes of a vast and vanished human world are there. And down to the sea goes the river. Onward to the end go the generations of men. The great sea waits for its own ; the Eternal God is our refuge and hope. This is but a hint of the epic of an immemorial humanity that is sung by Nile and Ganges, Tigris and Euphrates, Jordan and Tiber, Thames and Doon, Hudson and Mississippi. These are indeed parts of the river of God ; they make glad the city of man.

Thus it is with all nature. It is filled with the humanity of man. And Jacob's well was there. Yes, Jacob's well is everywhere. Nature is fair, divinely fair, to the child. Wordsworth has spoken for the childhood of the world : —

"There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream."

And for this testimony we thank the noble poet. But we cannot accept him as representative of humanity when he adds: —

"It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more."

The vague dream of childhood matures into the splendid vision of manhood. The child sees only the sun; the servant of God sees the angel standing in the sun. The child beholds only the tumultuous sea; the servant of God sees again the mighty angel, and this time standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the earth, filling the world with his humanity, filling it with the revelation of the humanity of God. The sun and moon and stars have in their bright faces the image of all the lovers that have transfigured the earth, the lustre of all the saints that have hallowed it. The triumphant shout of all the sons of God is preserved in the endless song of the morning stars. The life, the love, the struggle, the victory, the defeat, the hope, the fellowship, the dear and divine humanity of the whole race,

has risen into the heights of nature, has sunk into her heart, and for all thinking men she is immeasurably more and greater than she can be to the child. She is burdened with the pathos, the mystery, and the endless tragic prophecy of man's existence. The cloud rolls into the path of the setting sun. It is touched, shot through with light, changed into a burning mass of inexpressible splendor; it is filled with the glory of the sun that is passing. Something like this has happened to nature. It has rolled into the path of humanity; it is laden with the fires of human love, it is burning with the splendors of human faith and hope, it is transfigured in the meaning and mystery of the race that is on its way to God.

3. Finally, we learn here what nature can give, and what she cannot give. She can give water from her deep, abundant, beautiful well. In that bounty we see her large and precious ministry to man. But there is a limit to this ministry of nature. The water of life she cannot give. Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. "In his will is our peace." He has made us for himself, and we cannot rest till we rest in Him.

Three pictures rise upon the vision as we stand

by this old well in Samaria. There is first of all the well and its founder and his family, his flocks and herds. In this picture the well seems to be all that the Patriarch needs. Under its abundant and refreshing ministry the sense of its limitation becomes vague. We are so delighted with what the well can do that we cease to think about what it cannot do. Thus when we see childhood in the heart of nature, among its singing birds and springing flowers; when we see youth delighted with the existence that breathing and sleep and food renew; when we see men living a vigorous and happy life in gathering wealth, in commanding the material order, in drawing water for the thirsting world from the open fountains of material prosperity; when we see human beings pleased with mere amusements, contented with the mere social excitement, satisfied to be in the whirl of things, like the unprotesting driftwood in the eddy of the river, we are apt to think that the outward realm is everything, that Jacob's well is all that humanity needs. Ideals conform to this picture. The great sigh goes up: what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? The picture in the vast popular imagination is of Jacob and his caravan at the well, resting there, and refreshed from its ever-flowing fountains, and contented in this refreshment and rest.

As we dream this mere sensuous dream, another picture disturbs us. There comes a woman of Samaria. Once she was a beautiful child. At her birth she brought joy and awe into the world. The sweet tidings of her advent sped like light from heart to heart, from home to home. She was given to God in the thankful love, in the joyous faith of her parents. She brought into her home a new world of love. She fed that sacred flame by her needs, by her promise, by the gracious ritual of childhood. She grew in personal grace and charm. She put forth the fair prophecy of womanhood. She stood on the threshold of mature existence a vision of loveliness and hope. Look at her now. Her life is blasted. It is filled with shame. Honor is gone. All regard for truth is gone. All hope of good repute is departed. All expectation of noble love is dead. What a wreck is here, what reversal of hope, what blasting of promise, what outrage upon humanity!

What can Jacob's well do for this woman? Is there in its waters any full and adequate help for her?

> "What hands are here! . . .
> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green — one red."

This is the other side of the shield. We are other,

we are more, than nature. We are not under a law from which we cannot break. Man is, and nature is not, self-governing. He ought to be true to the law of his being; he can disregard that law; he has done it, he is doing it, and that is his heritage of woe. We have done evil where we were bound to do good. Our hearts condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. We need forgiveness, and no man looking into mere natural law can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." We need the effusion of divine power, the inspiration of the Almighty, and no man looking into the mere order of nature can say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." We need the might that comes through fellowship in the vision of the sublimest ideals, through the discipline of a common service, through the consolation of union in worship, and no man looking into the unrenewed society of our time can say, "I believe in the communion of saints." We need the sense of the life that is endless, that is without break or pause, that carries in its heart the consciousness of its infinite meaning for God, and again, no man looking into the mere laws of the cosmos, into the graves of the race, can say, "I believe in the life everlasting." To the well of Jacob we come for water; for the water of life we must go elsewhere. Nature as cosmos, nature as the world over against man, nature as

the name for the sum of the forces and laws other than man, can give us bread, but she cannot give us the bread of life.

The well that we need as men is the well of the spirit. The water that we need for our souls is the water of life. Our deepest need is the need of moral order, social justice, human unselfishness, personal integrity. We come for the power to rise from the natural man into the normal, into the spiritual man. We come for help to secure the high and proper attribute of humanity, — love. We cry for the birth of love, the growth of love, the manhood of love, its ascendency, its sovereignty, its endless and cloudless reign. And in man we come to know the character of the Power that is underneath Jacob's well, that is underneath our humanity, who of nature and of humanity in himself constitutes the divine universe. We come in vain to mere nature, we come with gain only when in man crowned with the attributes of love we behold the image of our God.

Thus the final picture is of Jesus at the well. There you see nature living in the vision of Jesus, there you note what her birds of heaven and her lilies of the field owe to his senses, and there you see him rejoicing in the great and constant ministry of nature. There you see the supreme human soul, the soul that in itself is higher

than the heavens, weary with its journey, resting by the well, accommodating its sovereign thoughts and feelings and purposes and acts to the capacities of the body, to the law and manner of a provincial and passing world, making itself of no reputation, becoming obedient to this mystery of humiliation; and there you behold mountain and stream, city and village, fruitful field and barren waste, the earth and the sky, the whole order of nature, hallowed in the memory of his divine humanity, burning and yet unconsumed in the holy fires of his love. There you note what nature can do and do well; there, too, you note what she cannot do. She is playground for the children of men; she is battleground for the sons of men. She is the rich condition of physical existence. She is the deep and dear old well to which all the generations come in gladness for refreshment and rest. But for the soul of Jesus, nature's hands are empty. He lives upon God. His meat is to do the will of God and to accomplish God's work. His bread is his Father's wisdom, his drink is his Father's love. His being moves in the sustaining strength of the Eternal. His perfect humanity is at an infinite height above nature. His thought answers to the thought of God, his love to the love of God, his will to the will of God. His thought is truth, his passion is love, his will is righteousness, his deed is power. He is the

perfect human soul, and therefore, he is the complete human utterance of God. Here is something that the cosmos cannot give. Here is the mind of God in the mind of man at his best; here is the heart of God in the heart of man at his highest; here is the will of God in the will of man in its sublimest mood; here is the Eternal Father in the Son who represents the origin, the mission, and the destiny of our humanity. Here with him at the well let us rest; here through his sovereign soul let us look upon God; here let us ask of him that he may give us the living water.

VI

LIFE AND LOVE AND TIME

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

Genesis xxix, 20.

GOOD men, as they grow older, become more and more sympathetic and grateful toward youth. And no grateful friend of youth can look unmoved upon the meeting of these two cousins, Jacob the son of Rebecca, and Rachel the daughter of Laban. The freshness, the beauty of morning is in the scene. The touch of a mystic humanity is in it; the profound and tender feeling of kindred is there, the feeling of kindred in the deepest-hearted race that ever lived. Jacob is a wanderer, an exile from his home because of his misdeeds. We can imagine what the vision of this fair cousin in the bloom of youth was to him. Rachel is at the monotonous task of a shepherd's daughter; and we can imagine her appreciation of the young man who rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and who that memorable day watered the flocks for her. "And Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept." The power of blood, the joy of kinship, the instinctive gladness and tenderness of concordant hearts,

the religious awe and delight of unnamed and unconscious love, took possession of both. Then comes the dust of the actual blown in the clean and shining face of the ideal. The commercial nephew speaks to the commercial uncle. For the prophetic father of Israel was not carried away by sentiment, at least he was not so carried away by it as to be incapable of making a contract. The contract with the father and uncle was that Jacob should serve for Rachel seven years; and we are told that they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her.

In this profoundly beautiful Old Testament story there is a path to some of the greatest things in human life; there is a path to the sources of our whole human world; there is an introduction to the living order of our humanity. The story seems to suggest for our subject the revelation of God through youth, and our discussion falls into two divisions, — love and life, and love and time.

I. We note in the story the great word love upon the lips of life. It was the love first of cousin for cousin, second of youth for youth, finally of man for woman and of woman for man. What did it mean? That question should not be difficult to answer. The experience is so genuinely, purely, beautifully human that it should not be hard to discern its character.

There is in it the vision of the ideal, the passion for the ideal. Jacob saw before him the beauty of the universe embodied, not wholly embodied, indeed. He was a sane lover, and doubtless felt that Rachel, fair as she was, could become fairer still. The embodied ideal suggested the ideal to be embodied, the ideal unembodied, fugitive, immeasurable, infinite, eternal. Jacob found, too, that he was able in the presence of this woman to revere all women. Rachel redeemed the race. In a degree all women were fair and sweet because they wore her nature. The ideal that glorified the nature, that sweetened the flesh and blood of this woman, lived in womankind with hallowing power. Further, this man found that he could respect himself. He had fallen from that height. His deceit and lies had cast him down. But he has somehow found reconciliation with his conscience. Doubtless in his case it was not a hard master. Still he has gone forth into the disinterested life. He has become a lover; and love gives the sense of worth; it gives strength and boldness. This man found the ideal in himself, giving to his being exaltation, refinement, dignity, composure, and hope. He looked upon mankind with new eyes. The ideal was in all men; they were wanderers like himself, and in one degree or another they were lovers. A further discovery yet this man makes. Here is the universe. It

must be the final home of the ideal. Somewhere that soul of fire resides in it. Perhaps that eternal spirit of loveliness fills it, and is the fountain of all its worth. Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades are perhaps but the high and shining symbols of it; the countless stars are perhaps but the bright and sovereign eyes with which the eternal ideal watches the ways of men. Thus in the vision of the ideal and in the passion for it this man has been led to the fountains of home, of human brotherhood, and of faith in God.

The true human home rests upon love. That love is the vision of an embodied ideal and the passion for it. This revelation of God is renewed in every fresh generation. The minister lives by the side of this great fountain of our humanity. He sees with Wordsworth the native endowment of childhood; the boundless surge of the Divine nature he notes behind it. With the exultant poet he sees the children sport upon the shore, and hears

> "The mighty waters rolling evermore."

He sees and hears, however, more than this. The tabernacle of God is with men. The minister beholds the boys and girls become young men and maidens. Their love of life, their intense desire for pleasure, their keen sense of humor, their aptitude for laughter, their unstable and fugitive

seriousness, their exposure to imposture, and their genius for mistakes do not hide from his penetrating and sympathetic vision the vast consecration of existence which love brings. Even in unmoral natures love issues in reverence for the object of it. It gathers itself into promises, it goes out in pledges, it offers up instructive prayers, it calls upon manhood to stand upon its honor, it summons the soul to a new and a responsible life. And where children have been fortunate in their childhood, where young men and young women have been fortunate in their youth, where their environment has been wholesome, and where their friends have been high, nothing on this earth is more beautiful or more significant than the flowering of the nature in honest human love. There is what we call the idealization of the woman by the man, and of the man by the woman. Upon the part of both there is insight into the awful beauty of the human soul. There is the discovery in the beloved life of an ideal embodied, and still unembodied, hovering over existence, and calling, "Come up higher." In each for the other, flesh and blood are sweetened by this ideal, indwelling and yet transcendent; in each for the other, personality is touched with awe because of the loving soul within, and yet more because of the fathomless capacity for love there. Here one comes to understand the majesty

of Kant's great dictum: Never use personality, your own or another's, as means, but always revere it as an end. When you read the story of Jacob and Rachel, Hæmon and Antigone, Dante and Beatrice, Edwards and Sarah Pierrepont, Burns and Highland Mary, you are sure that the heart of all true love is reverence, and that reverence is the only assurance of honor. Stand in awe and sin not. Nothing less and nothing other than the force of gravity can keep our planet to its orbit; nothing less and nothing other than the awe born of love can assuredly and peacefully control the passions of man.

Into this high mood the youth of each new generation are brought. They are brought hither in preparation for the greatness of family life. The consecration of love is a consecration in moral awakening, in moral purpose, in moral power. The family life of mankind is the first great revelation of the moral order of the world. The lover alone is justified in founding a home, the lover alone can keep his vow, the lover alone has the reverence that exalts the soul, that protects the inviolable rights of united personalities, that surely promises a harvest of happiness. Look at the trees in your orchard in the month of May. Is there any tree there undowered with blossoms, whose life has not flowered into this miracle of stainless beauty? That tree might as well be

dead. Those others, tossing their boughs tipped with exquisite life, sweetening the air with delicious perfumes, are the living trees. From them the golden harvest is to come. If you can think of a procession of loveless youth on the way to the marriage altar, you have over again, and this time in humanity, the dead tree. The human preparation for the august relation does not exist. The new life that consecrates for the new estate is not there. The fountain that is to quench the family thirst for all high bearing and all noble deeds is choked. Humanity there is denied, desecrated, put to open shame. Only the procession of lovers are qualified to found homes; only they whose natures have flowered in a great and beautiful ideal and who see each in the other the presence and prophecy of that ideal, only they whose souls have beheld each other in mystery and awe, are fitted to establish the greatest of all institutions. For the first revelation of normal youth is just this: the awakening of man is in love, the heart of love is reverence, and reverence is the last and the mightiest assurance of a just and good life.

It is true to-day that the lover is the source of all high social feeling. Self-respect is the summit of the soul, and when one has risen to that elevation, he finds in corresponding elevations a multitude of men. The fine thing about the sum-

mit of a towering alpine height is the discovery that it is not alone, that it is one of a vast range of similar heights, that it beholds rising about it sister peaks, on whose crests it watches with joy the play of morning and the glow of evening. The man who has found his own conscience has little difficulty in finding conscience in other men. The bad man lives in a valley. He is sunken in the deep and narrow defile of his own sordidness. He mistakes his misfortune for the order of human nature. There are, indeed, multitudes with him in his calamity. Still, the facts of their lives do not give the truth about man. They cannot see the mountains that tower all about them because they are lost in the abyss of their own selfishness. If they would but rise, in honor, in friendship, in the sense of obligation, in disinterested manhood, they would behold towering about them kindred spirits. It was one of the worst of politicians who said that every man has his price. He had spent his life in giving and in taking bribes; he had lived among those who were hungry for bribes; hence his generalization. If he had been himself a just man, he would have lived elsewhere, he would have met other men, he would have looked into the faces of kings.

Self-respect is found in love. The lover knows his worth, and his capacity for immeasurable worth. He beholds other lovers and notes their

worth, actual and possible. It is therefore easy for him to live, in open vision of all the mistakes and imperfections of men, with a prevailing sense of the majesty of the human soul. Here is a swamp maple. The autumn has come and turned it into a living, burning splendor. It knows the glory of its life and rejoices in it. It looks abroad and sees other trees of its kind. There they stand, all touched with the same fire, all burning in the same splendor. One swamp maple in the autumn differs in glory from another swamp maple. But the racial distinction is in every one of them. Each, as it burns in the autumn sunlight, sees that all the others are touched with the same beauty; therefore they are a brotherhood and preach the community of beautiful lives. The man who loves one woman reveres womanhood. Womankind through that special woman commands honor. The nature of the race is read in a single instance, the capacity of the race is seen in this particular member, the high function of all is beheld and revered in the sacred humanity of the individual person. The lover is the knight; he is the true seer of the order of womanhood.

In the same light he reads the nature of men. They are capable of his vision of an embodied ideal, his passion for it, his self-consecration in its presence. If his life is dyed in the color of

this dayspring from on high, if his nature is warm and resplendent with the presence in it of a hallowing affection, he is able to look abroad and to discover a host of men standing in the sun. Social sentiment in its purest character and in its highest power is the issue of love. Playmates, schoolmates, classmates, comrades in this profession and in that, citizens of the same great country, come to the divine fountain of love for the consecration of youth into the complete sense of human brotherhood. The older men and women have loved, their existence has been hallowed by it, their losses and sorrows are sacraments of it. They lead out to the older contemporary humanity of the world, carrying its flaming memory in the cloud of present grief. They lead backward to the humanity that has loved and suffered and gone. And here are the children, the young men and maidens of to-morrow, the lovers who are coming, who are to bless the world with their brightened lives. In between the older generation and the younger, between the retreating lovers and the advancing, are the present possessors of this divine charm. They unite in their own anointed humanity the past and the present and the future of mankind. In their shining faces we see the race reflected, and in spite of all brutality, we know that the race is one.

Here, too, is the fountain of all living faith.

The Bible is not the first witness for God. The world, the cosmos, the universe, is not the first. The soul alive through love is the aboriginal witness for God. Does color mean anything to the blind? Does great music signify anything to the deaf? Do Assyrian characters convey to you or to me the least knowledge of the hands that formed them or the minds that breathed thought into them? For the world at large the Scriptures must be translated from Hebrew and Greek into the language of the people. Still another translation must be made. The Bible is the lover's book. It is the greatest expression of the greatest love that has ever visited mankind. The lover's vision of the ideal is in it, and how sublime that vision is! The lover's passion for the ideal is in it, and how great that passion is! Now it is as soft and gentle as the zephyr, again there is in it the rush of the hurricane; here it is the low, sweet evening song of the bird, there it is the peal of thunder. The Bible is an elemental book, — elemental in the vastness of its vision of the ideal, and in the fullness and splendor of its passion. And this book is a sealed book until the angel of love breaks the seal.

Coleridge made a remark about the Bible which has become a proverb. He said that the Bible found him, and found him at greater depths of his being than all other books; therefore he

believed in it as he believed in no other. But this remark shows that Coleridge was alive. He had become a lover; he had seen with his own eyes the divine; he had felt its power upon his own heart. And the Bible came in to interpret, to expand, to exalt, to purify, and to breathe into his soul, in greater fullness, the Holy Ghost. Understandest thou what thou readest? said Philip to the Ethiopian. How can I, except some one shall guide me? was the Ethiopian's reply. What was the obstacle? There was the story of a supremely good man treated as if he had been supremely bad. That was plain to the reader. The puzzle was to know who the person was to whom the language applied. Philip's task was easy. He had only to recite the story of the ministry and the sufferings of Jesus, and the passage became clear. But suppose the Ethiopian had been without the sense of suffering love. Suppose him never to have known anything about the higher heroism of the human soul. Suppose him to have been mean, sordid, self-centred, destitute of the least experience of the illuminating power of love. In that case Philip's task would have been hopeless. You can as soon explain color to the blind, or a Beethoven symphony to the deaf, as you can expound to a loveless heart the greater things in the Bible. For the Bible is born of love; it is the sovereign historic expression of it, and that

one may understand it, he must bring to it the lover's mind and heart.

For the beginnings of faith we come back to youth. The ideal is in the beloved; it is not wholly there. The maddest lover will confess that. The ideal is in contemporary humanity, in so far as it loves, in so far as it has the capacity to love. The statue of Memnon sang when the morning light touched it; but all through the dark hours of night the capacity of joyous response to the appeal of the new day slumbered in its marble heart. That capacity made it a wonder. The youth who at the touch of the heavenly person breaks into the song of love, carried in his heart from the beginning that divine capacity. Thus the ideal lives in contemporary humanity because of love and because of the capacity for love. Any moment the light may come that shall inspire with song these multitudes of silent, statuesque lives.

The ideal is in contemporary humanity, but it is not wholly there. Love is as old as man. It began with the earliest beholding eyes, and the beating of the first human heart. It has been the romance of each new generation. It has held worth and joy in life against all brutality and all misery. It has hallowed the career of man. It has been through the whole terrible tragedy of history the prevailing presence of the Holy Spirit;

we can hear the successive generations singing, sometimes from the heights, and sometimes from the depths: —

> "All hail! ye tender feelings dear!
> The smile of love, the friendly tear,
> The sympathetic glow!
> Long since this world's thorny ways
> Had numbered out my weary days,
> Had it not been for you!"

However hard, however cold, however cruel it may have become at times, the race is carried in youth into the vast and beautiful kingdom of love.

The ideal is in mankind; but it is not wholly there. It is here, and it is afar; it is at our side, and it is higher than the heavens. It is indwelling in man, and at the same time transcendent, fugitive, immeasurable, eternal. It fills the universe. It is the order, the beauty, the goodness, of all that exists. It is the true *animus mundi*, the ineffable Soul of the universe. Its shadow has been in the lover's heart since love began. Its shadow is in the heart of lovers still. We chase the flying loveliness, and still we remain in that awful shadow. At length we perceive that we are in the secret place of the Most High, and under the shadow of the Almighty.

Thus youth in its dower of love reveals the rock on which the family life of mankind rests;

thus it discovers the bonds that bind into one brotherhood the whole race of man; thus it finds in its own heart the word of God, and is able to receive that word in sovereign power back from the Book of faith. And thus youth in its love, when it understands itself, may sing to the world:

"Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated the Gleam."

II. Love is of God; so wrote the beloved disciple in his old age. In his youth there had come to him through Jesus the revelation of God. As a young man the supreme aspect of that revelation had been love, and the organic structure of human life. Working in the fires of his passionate youth; living in his ideals as a son, brother, and disciple; flaming in his sympathies as a human being, Jesus had shown to John the love of God. Youth has left him long since. The Eternal loveliness in

the form of his Master has long ago vanished from the earth. For more than the half of a long life, the conflict in his heart has been between love and time. When life has reached its maturity, when the tumult of passion has subsided, when the world is passing away from us into the power of the coming generation, does love last? The spread of the eagle's wings is great and beautiful, but wholly dependent upon the strength of its spinal cord. Is it so with love? Its wide-reaching sympathies begin, as we have seen, in the mysterious fires of youth. Are they withdrawn, do they droop and fail, when the prime of physical life is past? Is the materialist right, whether philosopher or novelist, when he contends that love is the incident of physiology? When we grant to the materialist that love begins with the bloom of youth, are we bound to accept his conclusion that it fades with that bloom? May we not contend that, in the case of the true man and woman, there is evolved from the lower, sensuous love, a higher, a self-sustaining, a divine love, even as from the creeping caterpillar there is evolved the life that no longer needs the feet of its former self, that has wings to bear it upward from the earth?

Plato has dedicated one of his immortal Dialogues to love. Many friends meet at a great banquet. Around the table where so much genius and

good-fellowship is gathered the theme of conversation is love. Speeches are made upon this theme by a variety of persons. At last Socrates speaks; and his general thought is true for all time. Love is the life of the cosmos; it puts on a multitude of forms; it is subject to frightful abuses; it has, besides, lower forms and higher. Its inmost character is found in its power of ascension. It pushes ever upward, and still upward. It is defeated unless it flowers at last in the adoration of the Eternal loveliness. It begins in God, and, when free and unimpeded, through animal life, through human life, through the soul of the rapt lover of wisdom, it returns to God. What love is when it enters humanity, you may know when you see it issuing from humanity in the glorious passion of the philosophic soul. The last of love is the revelation of the first of love; the revelation of God through the youthful lover is perfected through the veteran lover.

In this great Dialogue, Alcibiades describes Socrates as like the bust of Silenus kept in the rooms of artists, outside huge, coarse, ugly, but containing within images of the gods. Nothing could better represent the life of any true man in his contest with time. Time takes the young Apollo and turns him into the bust of Silenus. And if the outward is everything, when youth is

gone, all grace, all charm, all strength is gone. But the exterior is not everything. Inside that bust of Silenus is the fair image of God, inside that body from which the strength and grace have gone there is a soul of loveliness looking up in awe and in hope to the Eternal. Look upon the outward, but do not stop with that; look inward and behold there the love that is growing deeper, richer, fairer, every day, that in its hiding-place prays for the coming of the kingdom of love, that waits for the freedom and the triumph of the City of God.

In the story of Jacob and Rachel, love meets time and service, meets them as obstacles in its way. Our interpretation of that wonderful idyll will be incomplete if we do not consider for a few moments this conflict of love and time.

That lover of the ancient world was compelled to wait and to serve. He made light of both time and service. The years were as days in the joy of his full heart. The present was so crowded with gladness that concern for the future was impossible. The service exacted of him was not even mentioned. It wrought within him chastity of heart; it gave him worth and self-reliance; and it was one great form of communion between him and the object of his love. Love conquered time, it conquered everything; sovereign in life, it became sovereign over all.

Is this high disdain for youth, and only for youth? Is this revelation of God through youth limited in its inspiration to youth? Does the east that gives the sun keep the sun? Does not the sun roll forward, spreading his light through the whole sky? Still rolling onward, does he not go hence in the west, revealing his soul of fire there as he could not reveal it in the east? This is the truth about the course of the sun; this is the truth about the path of the just. Maturity takes the ideals of youth and holds them with a quieter and surer strength. It sees the three great objects of youthful love, — the family, the social whole, the Infinite, — and follows them with a vaster and purer veneration. The morning song of the bird is louder, but infinitely less sweet and tender, than its evening song. Love has more passion in youth, but it has more pathos and piety in age. Love's all hail is great, its farewell is greater.

The first great advantage of the veteran lover over love's raw recruit is that he understands something of the power that has been with him all these years. He sees that the domestic life of man is an order of lovers. It is a vast, it is an immemorial institute. It has been burdened with error and smitten with sorrow. It has been girt about by fearful enemies; these enemies have fiercely assailed it, and often they have prevailed

against it and inflicted upon it the most serious injury. Still it has survived. It is bound to survive. It is in movement from the more to the less imperfect. It is under the ceaseless attraction of the ideal born of the highest love. To this it is held; toward this it is rising; into the likeness of this it will be transformed. You look at the star when it sparkles on the dim horizon line, when it sends its half-baffled gleam through the mist and smoke that lie round it on the lower levels of its career. That is not the whole star. Wait and watch it as it climbs. Slowly it creeps upward away from the foul vapors of the earth; steadily it escapes from limitation and distress, surely it reaches the zenith, and there it shines in pure, untroubled splendor. Look at the family life of the world in early times; look at it in later times. Mark in it this one feature, its steady improvement, its constant ascent. The Eternal lover whom we have found is lifting the human home out of the dust and darkness of animalism; he is carrying it upward into his own presence. He will bring the lover's home to its state of purity and light and peace at last. For this the older lover sees that he must serve and wait. And because of the love that he has toward that consummation of the human home, he discounts the services and disdains the years.

The veteran lover has another advantage. He

is established in the sense of history. Visions that brighten life for a moment and then vanish like the fires of morning in the east greatly discourage youth. Deferred hope, postponed fulfillment, makes the heart of the youthful idealist sick. The descent of the ideal into human existence is as slow as the descent of the glacier. This is a discouragement to youth. It was the youthful prophet who cried, "O Lord, how long!" The peril of every successive generation of youth is here. The thirst of young life is for immediate realizations. Eonian fulfillments through eonian struggle take the moral heart and hope out of thousands. The sun is up; why should it not ripen the grain before sunset? The ideal of brotherhood is here; why should it not at once mature the whole race in love? This postponed fulfillment quenches the light of the ideal in multitudes of the young. Thus the multitudes forsook Jesus; thus they abandon his cause today. The hunger for immediacy overcomes them. They gladly entertain the vision of Christ; they are unequal to the service and the patience of Christ.

Here the older lover makes a great return to the younger. The mills of the gods grind slow; the years bring one into that sorrowful consciousness. The mills of the gods grind slow, but they grind exceeding small; time brings one into

the happy sense of this inevitable process of the Eternal spirit. We look backward to-day as men in other days were unable to do. The vista of history is immensely extended. And the veteran lover surveys this immeasurable field with chastened joy. He sees on the far horizon a race made but little above the beast of the field. He watches the advance. It is out of the brutal state into something better; it is up from the savage into the barbarian; it is away from the barbarian into some rude form of civilization. The movement sways to this side and again to that; sometimes there is demoralization and temporary retreat. The advance is, however, soon renewed. Impediments are shed in the successive epochs, in the successive stages of the march. The man is advancing, the brute is retreating. And our veteran lover is a being who looks "before and after." The backward look has become a vast justification of hope. Behind the sheep is the shepherd driving his flock toward the uplands. The sheep that hitherto have been driven are here and there beginning to see the goal, here and there they are in headlong pursuit of it. Instinct and moral necessity are issuing, in the leading communities of mankind, in insight and choice. The race under compulsion is becoming the race under freedom; the shepherd is appearing in the van of his flock, and his sheep know his voice. Some

day the weary epoch of approach upon brotherhood by impulsion will become the happy epoch of advance by attraction. The slow movement under constraint will yet issue in the eager, victorious rush for the summits of human good.

This is the vision of the older lover. He knows something of the greatness of history. Into this sense of the humanizing process of time he has come; therefore he is undismayed. When it was the single human course that he was considering, he was like one watching the ascent of a solitary star. Now he is thinking of the race, and it is as if he were watching the slow ascent of a constellation. Perhaps it is Orion gleaming through the smoke of the city from the south; perhaps it is the Wain defining its starry order through the vapors of evening on the north. Here not a single star, but a system of stars, must rise. Now they are veiled from sight, and again they show their bright faces. Here one seems victorious; there the rest of the group seem lost. Is the salvation only of the remnant? Are those stars in the belt of Orion alone to go on? Are those two in the Wain that look up to their shining comrade in the north alone to ascend? As the mists rise and fall, as the clouds come and go, it seems a doubtful case for this constellation and that. But the night grows clearer, the hours move forward, and the watcher beholds each group

becoming more resplendent. The heavens are half scaled; the zenith is yet afar off, but the way to it is open and fair, and the ascent is sure. Such is the vision of the veteran lover concerning the brotherhood of man. He sees the obstacles in the way; but they are the mountain-tops, the earthly vapors, the flying clouds, that only seem to cross and obstruct the path of the serene, ascending stars.

The veteran lover has a yet greater advantage. The younger lover has God with him and hardly knows it. The older lover has God with him and rests his cause upon God. There is something very noble in the love that is conscious only of itself, that notes neither time nor toil. Jacob lost in the pure delight of loving, and unconscious both of the years and their burden, is a picture of infinite charm. It is a mood precious and full of power; it is not the highest mood, nor is it possessed of the highest power. The lover, so the Apostle John tells us, is born of God, "for God is love." And the older lover looks to the Eternal source of his being and his hope. He passes over to the side of the Divine lover; he learns to live and to work with God.

Here, surely, is a fundamental difference between youth and maturity. Youth is self-sufficient, nobly so. It is conscious of vision and power; it is still the morning hour. The work

to be done is great; but the strength is great, and the hour is at hand. Freedom, obligation, responsibility, personal achievement, the large plan, the confident campaign, the restless, rushing energy, the boundless and urgent hope, the kingdom of God at hand, — these are the great notes of youth. Let them ring forth from every new generation of youth. They blend in a great song of faith for mankind.

Maturity makes a different contribution. The consciousness of power is less keen, the consciousness of the work to be done is deeper. The sense of the self-reliant soul passes into the sense of the trustworthy God. The refrain comes to be, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." The sense of a world-plan, the sense of history within this world-plan, the consciousness of the Eternal power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, the vision of the Infinite lover of men, — these are the notes of the older believers. They blend in a psalm; and in return for the song of the youthful lover, this psalm is sent back from the heart of the veteran lover. Here men rely less on the light of this day, and more on the sun that will endlessly renew the day. This day must end, it must end soon; and when it is done the work will still remain unfinished. The day is brief for the youthful lover because of his joy in his beloved;

the day is brief for the veteran lover because so much remains to be done for his beloved. Both lovers meet in the sense of the brevity, the nothingness of time; but they meet in different moods. Jacob with Rachel to love laughs at time; Jacob blessing his sons at the end of life, with part of his human treasure on earth and part in the unseen, looks upon time with serious eyes.

The victory of love over time is easy until time brings up his dark ally, death. For the conflict of love and time issues in the conflict of love and death. And it is here that the veteran lover is strong. He has gone to the source of his own love; he has ascended to the spring of all the love that has blessed his days. His treasure has driven him to God for protection. He has risen into the presence of the Eternal love, and into his almighty hands he has committed the burden of his heart, and the burden of all hearts.

"Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

"Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

"And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well."

Flight means for the bird three things: plumage purified, wings invigorated, the goal won. The flight of time means for the soul that keeps alive within itself adoration of the Highest three things: humanity sanctified, faith strengthened, vision surer of the coming of the kingdom of God. Time brings the philosophic mind, leads the intelligence to the ultimate origin of the forces that work through life. Time carries the love of man up to the love of God as source, inspiration, and endless assurance. Time enables the faithful soul to trace the beauty of the world up to the Eternal beauty, to follow the streams of human worth up to the Eternal worth, and at the close of the day, with the toil unfinished and the great consummation unattained, to trust in perfect peace our whole human world — the bright and dear world of youth become the vast and sacred world of age — to the Infinite lover of men.

VII

THE SERVANT OF ABRAHAM

"As for me, the Lord hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren."

Genesis xxiv, 27.

We have heard in our time a great many things said against human nature. Indeed, there is an immemorial tradition against its trustworthiness. Our humanity has descended to us wrapt in a cloud of scandal leagues in depth, which only the wind of regeneration can disperse. We have come to entertain serious suspicions of our honesty and of the honesty of our fellow men. Perhaps this mood is not altogether without reason. Our behavior and the behavior of others have not always been true. On this ground of justifiable disappointment with ourselves and our friends we have come to think meanly of human nature. The errors, the follies, the vices, the crimes, and the sins of men are laid at the door of human nature. That is the fountain of all our woe. Corrupted in Adam, or in our prehuman ancestors, or in the polluted stream of vast and regular inheritance, we have come to think there is no health in us. Nothing good is to be expected for mankind until this cor-

rupted humanity is renewed, re-created, glorified in God.

It requires some courage to question the truth of this tradition in the face of all the weaknesses, vices, crimes, and inhumanities that seem to support it. These terrible things are here; but they should be counted, not against human nature, but against the abuse and outrage of it. Before going to Switzerland I had heard about the beauty of the Rhine. When I first saw it, I was greatly disappointed. I saw it again and yet again, and its character suffered still more in my esteem. Its waters were not simply turbid; they were the color of mud. They looked as if they carried dissolved in their tide the uncleanness of the whole region through which they flowed. I saw the river once again, and this time I was fortunate. There it swept onward, green as an emerald, swift, full, living, beautiful, worthy of the awful heights from which it issued, worthy of the spirit of romance that dwells on its banks, its sleepless current matching well the Watch on the Rhine, worthy of the sea toward which it went on its way singing. Unfortunate experiences have led men to think poorly of human nature. One-sided views have led men to elaborate the scheme of the innate depravity of the race. The stream of our humanity discolored in the freshet of selfishness has stood for the whole character of the

stream. In this way it has come to be an accepted truth that the unrenewed man is at heart a villain. He may be unconvicted; he may be unconvictable; all the same the vicious nature is there.

Against all this it must be said that human nature is the greatest thing we know. When we condemn ourselves, when we judge adversely our fellow men, we do so in the light of the ideal that shines in our own nature. When we complain of the mysterious order of the world, when we arraign the dumb indifference of the cosmos to human need, when we confess to a great moral disappointment as we survey the law of life and death under which we exist, we are searching in the universe for something as good and high as the soul of man. When we look for God, we look for the face that answers to our face and that is infinite, for the nature that corresponds to our nature and that is eternal. When we look for God, we look for something, for some one, worthy of the complete love and the perfect trust of our humanity. We condemn ourselves and others, we arraign the cosmos, we seek God, because our nature is great and high; our nature is great and high because God is evermore in it. This is what regeneration means; it is the renunciation of the godless life as false to our humanity; it is the affirmation of the life in God as the truth of our existence as men.

When I think of the civilization that has come out of the mind and character of man, I cannot but confess the majesty of human nature. The race started with nothing, and with a heavy inheritance from the animal. Out of this brute-encumbered humanity came ideals for the government of the personal, domestic, social, industrial, and political life of men. The ideals have grown into more and better; and in their strength the race has risen out of the depths up on to the heights. Science, art, philosophy, and religion have arisen out of human nature to serve human existence. Great, surely, is the nature out of which these worlds of high and wondrous and serviceable thoughts have come. We owe to human nature all that we possess. Man is made by the entrance of God into the animal; the history of man is the record of immeasurable achievement, of immeasurable sacrifice, of immeasurable hope, and of dauntless courage in the face of immeasurable difficulties. Christianity is the sovereign possession of the race; and it is the product of the humanity of Jesus Christ. When we read our nature and the nature of our fellow men in the presence of the humanity of Jesus, we cease to accuse the Maker of it, we no longer blaspheme God's order in the soul and his perpetual presence in it, we behold in awe and in penitence the Holy Ghost moving in the

living stream of our being. For God and man are not two but one; when we separate ourselves from Him, we do not follow our nature, we depart from it, and we sin against it. It is, therefore, a fresh introduction to human nature as it stands in the vision of God to look upon its pure representatives, to behold it mirrored in the clear morning traditions of a great race. I am persuaded that Christianity is to become the religion of man, because it is the sovereign expression of the humanity in which God lives.

It is a study in human nature to which we are introduced by the words of the text. The words are the words of the servant of Abraham. They present a piece of humanity worthy of serious consideration, and illustrative of the richness and truth of which human nature is everywhere capable. This servant of Abraham is an expounder of the nature that we wear, an example of the religious use of existence, an inspiration to all high, disinterested, and peaceful bearing toward the Infinite and toward men.

The twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis is one of the loveliest stories ever written by the hand of man. Those of you who are familiar with it will wish to read it again. Those of you who have never read it have in store a delightful experience. The chapter is complete in itself. Every word in it is as pure as a dewdrop, and

the whole story shines with the peace and lofty light of a star. Every lover of youth must feel the beauty of it, the delicacy of it, its exquisite and rare touch. Every one who reveres noble parenthood must feel its pathos and dignity.

Let us recall the outline of the story. Abraham is an old man, and his end is near. He has one bright, prophetic son. His lovely mother has been laid to rest. In this bright image of that vanished soul all the old man's love and hope are centred. The son is of age, and the time has come for him to found a home of his own. The venerable father, infirm and with the feeling of death creeping over him, aware that he cannot much longer guide the career of his prophetic son, calls his faithful servant, and asks him to put his hand under his master's thigh and swear that he will not take a wife for his son from the daughters of Canaan. They are sensuous, and wholly so. They are base-minded. They are without great ideals. They live from hand to mouth, immersed in sense and time, with no vision of the future, with no clear consciousness of the sacred office of their humanity, with no controlling and transfiguring religious passion and hope. Go to the home of my kindred far away in Mesopotamia. There my brother has a child pure and exalted as my son. Ask that fair cousin to come and join her destiny with that of my boy. Then comes the

touch of humor in the heart of the deepest and tenderest seriousness, the humor that shows how little human nature in its essential features has changed in the course of the ages. The old servant is willing to swear, and he is willing to go on the rather uncertain errand, but he mildly suggests: Perhaps the young woman will not come! The father sees at once the point of this suggestion, and he replies: Well, if she does not come, you will be clear of your oath. But God will send his angel and dispose her to come. This is one of those high friendships that are made in heaven, that are created in human hearts by the breath of God. Go and see.

I cannot pursue the story further. It all turned out with complete success, and with exquisite beauty, and according to the religious vision and faith of the father. There was the long journey; the unslackening perseverance; the time at which the company arrived at its destination, the time at which the young women came out to water the flocks; the beautiful picture of Rebecca at the well, her sweet courtesy, the depth and grace of Eastern hospitality, the grave dignity and high manner of the servant. There was the quiet joy of that home to which the message was delivered, the turning over of the question for Rebecca to answer, the appeal of the parents for delay, the insistence of the victorious servant

upon dispatch, and the long, prosperous, happy journey back. But I must send you to the story as told by the inspired writer. It is one of the fairest poetic pictures of domestic life, touched and transfigured by love, lifted and glorified by religion, that is to be found in the records of mankind.

We return to the servant. In him we find seriousness and humor, prompt and intelligent obedience, the mind to entertain a clear purpose and the will to carry it into complete realization, the fine sense of subordination and the high feeling of self-respect, the power of command, the gift of gracious speech, the character to inspire confidence, the force that cannot be diverted from its goal, the honor that stands guard over the fair young woman committed to his care, and the absolute disinterestedness of a soul that has but two fundamental desires, one the desire to serve, the other the desire to serve well.

This delightful person describes in a strange way the conditions of his success. He says that he went, and he says that he was led. "As for me, the Lord hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren." These two ideas did not seem to him to be incompatible. Indeed, they seemed essential to the great and happy experience through which he had passed. On the one side, everything seemed to come by Divine

guidance and help; on the other, human wisdom, effort, and fidelity were assumed as indispensable. The two forces that brought success were the strenuous, self-dedicated soul, and the sense of God's help in this faithful soul. Look for a moment at this commanding combination.

Here is a man who sets his heart upon success in business. That shining goal of business success stands out before him bright and alluring. How can it be gained? In the first place, he must join his race doing business in the world. No man can make business successful all by himself. Isolation from the trade of the world means failure. A man must be where he can buy from others and sell to others, where he can work with others. He must stand in the great centres of trade, he must be joined to his kind, if he would succeed. And more than that, he must in fellowship with his kind do his best. Here is a piece of work to be done. He must do it with all his might. He is working for a certain firm; he must think and feel and work as if that firm were his own. There is a man in the path of success. Then comes the flood, then come the opportunities, the appreciations, the rewards, the sense that he is essential to the business that he is serving, and the man is carried on toward success. Shakespeare says: —

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

That is true only upon condition that the business man is first of all in union with the business world, and that, in the very best meaning of the phrase, he is there for all that he is worth.

Look at this essential combination in education. A man sets before him as the aim of his spirit an educated mind. That goal shines in the distance and commands his desire and excites his hope. But he can never become an educated man in separation from his kind. A mere star-gazer, a moonstruck person, one wandering alone in fields studying flowers, looking upon brooks and streams, lifting his eyes abroad upon the vacant earth and up toward the vacant sky, dwelling aloof from mankind, cannot compass a cultivated mind. The path to education is first of all through fellowship with one's kind. Think what a child learns from its child contemporaries. Think what a precious and indispensable part of its education comes through play, through dreams, through high fictions, through the make-believe social world, through the amazing conversations and communions of child with child all over the broad earth. When the child becomes youth, its contemporaries again are its educators. Youth plays upon youth through imagination, sympathy, and all subtle instincts;

and again there is a fresh development of intellectual power. When teachers are sought, what does that mean? It means that the single human being is putting himself in league with the older generation, with the wiser, larger, better mind there. When it is a call for books, the same principle holds. What are books? The most living things in the world. As Milton said, they are the precious life-blood of the master spirits of mankind. When you read the pages of a great book you are in communion with a great mind. Thus we see that education at every point implies fellowship with the minds of other men in a rising order of wisdom and power. And the person who is in communion with the mind of the world must again do his best. It is not enough for the child to be among children, for youth to be with youth, for the younger generation to be in the presence of the great and wise of the older generation, or to have near them the highest books of the world. There must be individual alertness, receptivity, docility, eagerness, passion, persistence, the throwing open of the whole mind to the high object in devouring desire. What is the chief value, from an educational view, of that wonderful book "Up from Slavery"? It is an entertaining, it is a marvelously human book. What is its philosophical value? It is this. It shows the desperate effort of

an eager soul to get out of the impotence of its own isolation, the desperate endeavor of a poor, starved life to get into fellowship with the great, resourceful and powerful race of man. When Booker T. Washington got to Hampton, he knew that he had reached the point where he could touch the soul of the world, where he could feel the soul of the world passing into him. His education was assured the moment that his weary feet crossed the threshold of that benign institution.

We are now ready for the application of our principle to the life of the spirit. How can one acquire a noble character? How can one secure the exaltation and refinement of one's humanity? How can one realize within the soul the best that God has made possible for the soul? That is the great question before us. And this much is clear, that it cannot be done in isolation from the best life of our time, from the highest endeavor of the world, from the Holy Spirit in human history.

1. In this servant of Abraham there was first of all the aim, the errand. This old servant undertook a long journey, a journey from the Mediterranean sea-coast to Mesopotamia. But the goal was before him from the first. He knew what he wanted, and his life was commanded by the thing that he wanted. His was not an

aimless, errandless life. It had a path as definite as the channel of the river, a goal as sure as the sea toward which the river moves. That aim, that errand, was the beginning of the servant's significant humanity.

As I watch the lives of men, older and younger alike, the gravest defect I find at this point. On the serious side of existence men are largely without aim. What becomes of the stream that cannot find a channel, that has forgotten its fountain, that has lost its vision of the sea whither it is bound? It becomes a swamp, a breeder of disease, a disseminator of death. And the man who has no sense of having come from God, no sense of an errand in life, no sense of a quest for what is worthy and enduring; the man who is aimless and errandless as a moral being, is a human swamp, a generator of the plague that curses mankind. The day cannot begin until the sun is risen; manhood cannot begin until the will is up in a great resolve, until the soul is pursuing a great end.

2. We must note the beauty of the end toward which that old servant journeyed. He traveled that he might bring that lovely cousin from between the two rivers to the shores of the Mediterranean. The Greeks had an alluring conception of the Muses. They were nine in number, supernatural in grace, all beauty, all

purity, all joy. What did these immortal women represent? Beautiful ideals, beautiful ends, to be striven after, to be served, and in some measure secured. When Herodotus wrote his wonderful history, he wrote it in nine books to correspond to the nine Muses. Every book had hovering over it one of these exquisite superhuman figures, an ideal commanding the historian at his task. His whole work rose up in love and sincerity as an offering to the ideal. And if the father of history could see an ideal through a work of art, may we not see in that fair life between the two great rivers the beauty of heart, the grace of spirit, the dignity of nature, the glowing, prophetic humanity which God made us to behold, to pursue, and finally to possess? Beautiful is the errand of the soul, fair and high is the end of man. Ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Be ye imitators of God as dear children. Look up into the heights of your humanity, and you will see splendors that put to shame the starry sky.

3. There was the romance of the servant's errand. We must think of him traveling those seven hundred miles singing every morning and every evening. He was on an errand of love; fountains were playing in his heart, and birds were singing beside them.

There have been many souls in history who

have sought the Lord in this way. And I regret to add that there have been multitudes of those for whom the search for godliness, the quest for a sacred existence, for the beauty of the Lord our God, has been a dismal enterprise. Such caricatures of the highest human mood we have seen and we have deplored. There is no darker or sadder shadow cast upon the loveliness of man's supreme privilege than that which is cast by these deplorable persons. Think not of them, but of their opposites. Think of the souls that have found the sovereign romance of existence in seeking and in serving God. Think of Paul traveling over the whole civilized world of his time, with the light of eagerness in his eyes, with the sense of a sublime romance in his heart, seeking everywhere the Eternal grace, the Infinite love. Whatever may happen to the outward life, however we may fail or succeed there, let us keep our hearts forever young, forever singing on our way to God, traveling in the dawn, under the heat of noon, and in the dusk of evening on a high behest, with the gladness of a great and gracious enterprise in our souls, and with the sense of a vast and sacred romance upholding our lives.

I must pause here to remind you that the goal, the lovely goal, the divinely romantic goal, can be found only along the royal road. We cannot find it in the saloon, in the gambling den, in the paths

of shame. The beautiful Mesopotamian maiden lives not there. The ideal for which she stands to us does not shine over those dark waters, over those hideous wastes; nor over the low book, the vile companion, nor over the ways devious and ugly that tempt youth to depart from honor. The church stands for all those forces of wisdom, sentiment, prayer, and mystic response from the Highest that take the seeker after God into the fellowship of man at his best, that pour upon him the power of an availing humanity. Let the seeker after the highest for himself and his kind journey not alone; let him fare forward in the great chorus of a singing humanity, in the great concert of the prophetic minds of history, in the mighty fellowship of the kings and priests, the heroes and saints, of mankind. In that vast and inspired communion the individual resolve will become like the inevitable will of God.

As we part from this noble servant of a great man, we see again the clean and high and peaceful heart in which true service forever issues. The man who took the oath of service and kept it, whose errand was unselfish from the beginning to the end, when he returned in the triumph of an accomplished mission, handed over to his master's son the vision of beauty that rode by his side those seven hundred immortal miles, and went his way in silence, but with the sense of

honor in his heart, and the deep and dear content which they gain who serve God well, and who are true in the great and small things alike to their solemn obligation to man.

We go our several ways through time. Again and again we part from high friends. We seem to be left alone at last. But when we serve with truth, run our errand with honor, bring some work of beauty to its fair consummation, and pass into silence, and out of sight of men, we are not forsaken. Our nature is alive with the great, singing, prophetic voices of our service. The dignity of farewell is the note of the humanity that God has made self-sufficing. The disinterested soul is the supreme possession; the benignity of history, the beauty of the Lord our God, the grace of Jesus Christ, goes with it. The last and highest beatitude in this world of the faithful seeker after God and servant of man is an honorable soul, a great, rich, singing human heart, the power to go one's way in dear memory, in devout hope, in deep and divine content.

VIII

THE UNTROUBLED HEART

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.
John xiv, 1.

MAN'S great and proper human interests are his treasure and his burden. They are his joy and they are his sorrow. You see a hen and her brood. There you have man and his essential and dear human interests. The brood are the delight of the mother bird; they are also her dismay. Their safety is her peace; their peril is her trouble. And her poor heart is seldom free from dread, for out there in the field the hawk may at any moment appear. The brood are so heedless, and her sheltering wings are so insufficient.

Who does not see in this image a picture of his own life? Certain things, certain causes, above all, certain persons, are inexpressibly dear to him. They are the living extensions of his own being. They are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. They are to him fairer and dearer than his own life. He goes abroad with them in the fields of time. They are his delight and they are his distress. They are his delight because they

make existence rich and great. They are his distress because they are insecure.

Here we touch the deepest source of human anxiety. Love's alarm is the profoundest fear. It is the recurrent note in all loving hearts in all the relations of life. Parents tremble over the children of whom they are fond, and when children are worthy, they look toward their parents with a presentiment of trouble. It is so with noble friend and noble friend everywhere. So it was with the disciples. They loved their great Master with a desperate attachment, and now he was about to leave them. Oh, the possible pain of a loving heart! How awful it is! How can we allow ourselves to love uncertain lives when love's loss brings such inexpressible pain? There is a figure that recurs several times in the Old Testament that impresses one deeply, — a bear robbed of her whelps. Poor beast! who does not pity her? Who does not see working through her fury the elemental passion of love? If that brute heart could speak, what a wail it would send forth! The desperate distress is all unutterable. Turn from the poor animal to man. Watch the face of King David as he receives the announcement of the fate of Absalom. "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son,

my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" What is one to do with this fearful capacity, this heart that loves, that loses, that suffers?

It must be said that this is no new question. It is the question of our humanity. The most urgent of all practical questions for a loving humanity is this: How can we reach the beatitude of the untroubled heart? That question is old, it is as old as man, and I must now mention several great historic answers to it.

1. There is the answer of despair, — curse God and die. That is one of the oldest answers, and one of the most recent. It is the answer of the suicide. From how many defeated lives this answer has gone forth, no tongue can tell. It is indeed appalling to reflect how many hearts find existence unbearable. "End it when you will" is for many the only hope. Such despair is indeed seldom the product of pure sorrow. Sin has brought ruin to character. Life has become a waste wherein wander the tormenting presences born of an evil conscience. Jesus was in the wilderness tempted of the devil. He could bear it because he was unfallen and true. These terrible lives are themselves the wilderness, and their misdeeds are their sole and intolerable companions. Oftener than we think, this is the history of the life that ends itself in despair. There are

also many cases where disease is the cause. There are not a few overwhelmed with disaster. Still, there is no reason why we should refuse to look at the answer, whether it comes out of the heart of disease, or sudden over-mastering misfortune, or pure, irreconcilable sorrow. Despair is despair. Its answer is the same : —

> "O length of the intolerable hours !
> O nights that are as æons of slow pain !
> O Time, too ample for our vital powers,
> O Life whose woeful vanities remain
> Immutable for all of all our legions
> Thro' all the centuries and in all the regions,
> Not of your speed and variance do we complain.
> We do not ask a longer term of strife,
> Weakness and weariness and nameless woes;
> We do not claim renewed and endless life
> When this which is our torment here shall close,
> And everlasting conscious inanition!
> We yearn for speedy death in full fruition,
> Dateless oblivion and divine repose."

Out of books written in the dim dawn of history, out of books written yesterday, and, more impressive still, out of thousands of human hearts suffering and dying at our side, comes this tremendous, ageless answer of despair.

2. The Stoic answer next demands our attention. The path to peace is through apathy. Let all strong desire, all affection, pass out of your nature, as the moisture of the earth evaporates under the burning power of the sun. Under the

heat of the sun the earth becomes fruitless, careless dust. Thus under the influence of reason let all affection, all kindness, all fondness, all passionate attachment and devotion steam up out of your being until it shall become as dead and unresponsive as the desert. The desert can produce nothing; the apathetic heart can love nothing. No harvest ever disturbs the peace of the desert; no bereavement ever distresses the loveless heart. Where nothing is loved, nothing can be lost.

The Stoics at their best were a great race. They were full of composure and high disdain. They accepted the humanities, but failed to understand them. They accepted them, and then tried to transcend them. They sought peace through reduction of desire. The sweet society in which the individual human being is set — the solitary in families — gave place to stern individualism. Epictetus seeks for personal freedom. Marcus Aurelius seeks for the government of his spirit; but in this noble quest affection dies a slow death. The Stoics came to believe that their hearts unmanned them, that tenderness undermined their strength, that all sweet affections were in the way, that they must shed them as impedimenta. They sought strength, therefore, by the path of lovelessness. They sought peace by parting with their humanity. This is the great mistake of the Stoics. It is the mistake that many men are

making to-day. We all have seen young men and women going out into life with the most precious of all possessions, a sympathetic, sensitive, profoundly feeling human heart. We have seen them eagerly and persistently devising ways and means for getting rid of their tenderness, for hardening the sensibilities, for casting out that painful but divine capacity for attachment. How shall we attain the untroubled heart? The Stoic answers, Through apathy; love less and less till sensibility shall pass away.

3. The next answer that merits attention is the Epicurean answer. It is indeed strange that the Greek word used by our Master in the text is a favorite word with Epicurus and his disciples. He uses the noun *ἀταραξία*, which means repose, untroubled repose, the repose of the untroubled heart. This beatitude Epicurus was seeking in that old world, just as we are seeking it in this new world. According to what plan did Epicurus seek it? The way out of pain, he contended, is by the path of pleasure. He meant by pleasure not sympathetic, social pleasure, but individual, egoistic pleasure, refined or coarse, of the mind or of the body, as the case might be. Personally, Epicurus preferred the refined and intellectual pleasure. The way out of pain is by seeking, each individual for himself, the pleasure that gives him repose.

Does not that sound very much like a chapter from the social life of our time? Epicurus is still with us, and he is far more popular than the Stoic. For what consolation do afflicted people seek, if they are not noble, if they are not commanded by the heavenly vision? They drown grief in pleasure. They seek escape from themselves, from their losses, from their distresses. They drink, they gamble, they plunge into the vortex of a dissolute social life, they spend their hours of leisure in excess or in devising new excesses. They destroy their humanity. For the surest and shortest way to an empty and inhuman heart is the path of individual self-seeking.

This immolation of humanity, and especially of youthful humanity, so occupies the vision of serious lovers of their kind that the motive behind it is less clearly seen. The immolation is indeed appalling. The ruthless destruction of the native outfit in fineness of feeling, in capacity for fond and enduring attachment, in golden enthusiasm, in high and tender hospitality of soul, is a calamity. Burns is nowhere more impressive than when he sings of a certain deadly misdeed: —

> "I waive the quantum o' the sin,
> The hazard o' concealing;
> But, och! it hardens a' within,
> An' petrifies the feeling!"

This horror of a petrified humanity we see all about us. It is the most serious thing that we have to face, this blight of the race through pleasure in the successive generations of youth. For in each successive generation of youth there is a fresh apocalypse of God. Youth is a fresh, divine sunrise in humanity, and when all those fires are quenched, when that light is put out, God is in a serious sense banished from the contemporaneous world. We live upon the light that was, upon the light that shall be, but the present is overcast and heavy with gloom.

This horror of our generation and of each new generation should not blind us to the main motive behind it. This world is still a troubled world. Human hearts are here doomed to much suffering. The longing for relief from pain is indestructible, and when misguided it drives men and women into fearful errors. These seekers after peace take the wrong way. It is their error that brings destruction.

"What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

"Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

"Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd — 'While you live,
Drink! — for, once dead, you never shall return.'"

Immolate your humanity, and faith becomes impossible. Men believe in God because of what they find in man. When personal manhood is gone, the power to see God in the manhood of the race is greatly impaired. By and by the manhood of the race fades into a legend. The reality that remains is the interior horror of the dissolute soul. Then comes the quest for relief in the abyss of vanities.

4. In the fourth place, there is the Buddhist answer. The universe is against us. Fate is everywhere against the lover. The universe has decreed that everywhere and in all things the fond, human heart shall be defeated, and its hope forever blasted. The path into peace is the path of quenched, annihilated desire. Give it all up. Expect nothing, long for nothing. Fast and pray. Live in the reverent and compassionate service of your fellow men. Reduce your being to a vanishing-point, and expire at last, a desireless spirit, in the eternal unconsciousness.

"Take me, and lull me into perfect sleep;
Down, down, far-hidden in thy duskiest cave;
While all the clamorous years above me sweep
Unheard, or, like the voice of seas that rave

On far-off coasts, but murmuring o'er my trance,
A dim vast monotone, that shall enhance
The restful rapture of the involate grave."

This mighty religion, the noblest of all faiths outside our own, has no hope for love. Its best word to love is, by the path of compassionate service, to cease to be. This is its best word and its last. There is no path to peace for those who love except the path of surrender. Dark and infinite despair is the thunder-looking sky that overhangs millions of our fellow men who love and suffer. The universe has for them no sympathy, no pity, no regard. The Eternal is not on their side; the Eternal is against them. In such straits, what can the bravest and the deepest-hearted do but serve and mourn, pity and pray, "lifting up dumb eyes to the silence of the skies," and by every high and sweet device to hasten the great deliverance: —

"Come, lead me with thy terrorless control
Down to our mother's bosom, there to die
By abdication of my separate soul:
So shall this single, self-impelling piece
Of mechanism from lone labor cease,
Resolving into union with the whole."

5. Finally, there is the Christian way into the untroubled heart. That way is through belief in God, the Eternal lover of man. "Believe in God, believe also in me." That is the great imperative.

Believe that the universe is on the side of the man who loves, that the universe is our Father's house, that his supreme gift is the loving human heart, that his overwhelming witness in time is the heart that loves Him and those whom He has made, that a community of loving hearts is God's great orchestra, set in the centre of this boundless and terrible immensity, rolling out the psalm that is in his heart. The community of lovers, the revelation of God, the Eternal lover, — that is the Christian way into the untroubled heart. How completely opposite to the Buddhistic faith is that! "God is our refuge!" The Eternal soul is our "present help in time of trouble!" "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed!" "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

The Eternal God is the source of peace to the loving heart in the great Hebrew faith, and when we come to the Christian faith, Paul speaks for us: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The whole world was dear to the Apostle, and he saw this dear world dying every day. You must enter into his hope and fear, his pos-

session and his sense of peril, if you would know the majesty of his words : " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The heart of Christ is the revelation of the heart of God. From the power of this eternal love we cannot be torn away. The inseparability of man and the sacred possessions of man's soul from the Eternal lover of mankind, — there is the way into peace. There is the peace that passeth understanding.

Look now at Jesus as the incarnation of the truth of his own words, — " Let not your heart be troubled." When he uttered these words, he was on his way to prison, judgment, and death. He who deserved the best was on his way to receive the worst. He who had done the world the supreme service was about to be driven out of the world through ignominy, contempt, and crucifixion. And as he treads this via dolorosa, here is his song: " Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me." How great

that song was, sweeping up against the blackness of the night! We dishonor the Lord by our pity! "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children!" Jesus went forth a conqueror. His spirit is the mightiest that has ever appeared among men.

What are the notes of the true hero? Composure in awful peril, consideration for those weaker than he, the maximum of regard for others, the minimum of concern for himself, confidence in his cause, joy in living for it, peace in dying for it. These are the notes of the true hero; these are the notes of Christ as he faces the end. He had himself an untroubled heart under the shadow of the cross. That is the first note of our hero. The second is that he thought of those who were weaker than he. Was it not a time for the disciples to be consoling the Master? Was it not an hour when they should have turned to pour balm into his spirit? He thought of them, and gave them his compassionate, his divine regard. He thought of those who were weaker than he, even when their trial was infinitely less than his. As he went forth, — and this is another note of the hero, — there was in him the maximum of concern for others and the minimum of concern for himself. And finally, he went forth confident in his cause,

securely centred in the austere benignity of God's will, glad to live for it, and through the agony and bloody sweat lifted into eternal triumphant reconciliation to it.

I call attention to the infinite humanity of Jesus Christ, and to his sublime heroism. Both his treasure and his strength were born of God, and in God he found eternal protection and peace. Our Lord's humanity was infinite in its tenderness, in its reach, in its burden, and he was full of peace in this perilous possession because he was full of God. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." There is peace for man nowhere else. You recall Dante's great line: —

"In his will is our peace."

This is the way home. We must not surrender to despair; we must not seek strength through contempt of love; we must not try to drown pain in forbidden pleasure; we must not blaspheme the Soul of the universe, nor imagine that it is deaf to our prayers and dumb to our needs. We must keep our human hearts. The supreme possession is the true human heart. In its possible depth, range, tenderness, and mystery past finding out, lies the image of the heart that beats eternally at the centre of the universe. Nothing but life can generate life; nothing but love can create love. And whoever loves, even

if he fares forward, often in wild and solitary places and far from home, may know that God is with him; for since God is love, his love is God.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Keep it, increase it, carry it up to the heights, down to the depths, and abroad as wide as morning from evening; and if it seems that you cannot live in such a world as this with such a capacity for fondness, go with the prophets to the secret place of the Most High, hide with them under the shadow of the Almighty; walk with your Master on his way to the cross, and listen to his triumphant song: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me."

IX

BELIEF AND FEAR

"The devils also believe and tremble."
James ii, 19.

THIS fact I have always regarded as highly creditable to the devils. They had sense enough to believe, and they had conscience enough to fear. Our devils are in a worse plight. They neither believe nor tremble. This is vastly to their intellectual and moral discredit. It shows them to be much lower down in the scale of existence than the beings to whom reference is made in the text; it shows them to be nearly without sense and almost without conscience.

My purpose is to read a lesson from the demons of St. James. Ministers are sometimes accused of preaching over the heads of their congregations, of selecting ideal persons, and of deducing the laws of life for ordinary mortals from the veritable saints and heroes of mankind. There can be no such complaint against the subject for to-day. The beings about whom I am to reason are, to put it mildly, hardly up to our level. Few of us would care to be addressed in the vivid language of the text. We are ready to grant that we live far beneath our privilege as

men, but hardly low enough to be classed with demons. Yet from these strange beings we may learn something. I am to speak of the intellectual and moral dignity implied in reasonable belief and fear.

What is the object of belief, the great, abiding, purified object of religious belief? It is the world's best thought as wrought out by all the generations of religious genius. It is the solemn discovery and announcement of the highest and sanest minds of the race. There is the existence of one Supreme Being, in whom all men live, in whom all worlds consist. There is the consciousness of his goodness, the sense of his tender mercies, the assurance that He is the Eternal lover of man. There is the moral order of the world. Here it is forever true that God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit shall reap life eternal. The character of the harvest depends upon the nature of the seed sown. The men who sow to the wind reap the whirlwind. Cause and effect constitute for the unjust a wheel of fire, and for the just a shining stairway to freedom and joy. No man can do evil and not suffer, no man can do good and not receive recompense; the inviolability of the moral order is absolute. There is in man the sense of obligation. He is under

bonds to do what is right, and he is answerable to the Highest for his deeds. That sense of obligation may be abused, but it cannot be bribed; it may be ignored, but it cannot be overawed; it may be for a time suppressed, but it cannot be expelled. There is the permanence of the human spirit, its involution with the life of God. And there are the person, teaching, career, and achievement of Jesus Christ as the sovereign expression of the religious belief of mankind.

In the presence of this august order of thought, vaster and more solemn than the starry heavens, we live. As we look up into its measureless heights, consider its shining and unfathomable fullness, think of it as the glorious firmament raised over our humanity by the sublimest spirits of our race, and by them in the creative strength of insight and love, and in an agony of earnestness and noble sorrow; as we survey this surpassing achievement of man at his highest, what shall be our attitude toward it? Shall we deny and disregard, or shall we believe and fear?

I. What does belief in it imply as to the mind of the believer? It implies many things, only a few of which I can name. It implies sensibility in the presence of this high human world, susceptibility to its vastness and beauty. In a way, belief implies the power to take it in.

There is doubtless much superficial belief. Few indeed reflect in a rational way the great beliefs of the gospel. Yet these beliefs are in the feelings, in the instincts, in the sympathies, of every genuine believer; they are in his heart, and he knows that they are there, even as the sailor knows that the full moon and the great stars have their image in the sea through which the ship that absorbs his attention sails. Thus God has set eternity in the heart of sincere and believing men.

Unbelief is much more likely to be shallow. It does not start from the great premise that something must be true. It does not heed the fact that on the whole the race is a believing race. It does not pause over the weakness of the individual thinker in comparison with the strength of the whole body of creative historic thinkers. Unbelief does not dream that it is as impossible for the individual mind to replace the best thought of the race upon the fundamental things of faith as it would be for the individual person to wipe out of existence all government, all laws, all social customs, all business methods, all discoveries, all adaptations of science to the task of living, and in absolute independence of their influence, to put in their room something worthier. We inherit our human world. We inherit business, science, art, literature, social cus-

toms; we inherit our language, our country, our religion. We inherit to use and to improve; but our first duty is to measure, if we can, the greatness of our inheritance. The human world that we have inherited is infinitely rich. The unbeliever does not take it in. He rarely gives the things of faith a chance to speak for themselves. His denial is apt to be extempore; his unbelief, even at its best, is unsympathetic, and it is always in danger of shallowness.

The profound believer reverses this process. He sees the magnitude and impressiveness of the religious interpretation of existence. He opens his intelligence to its appeal. He allows it to speak for itself; he allows it to reflect itself in imagination as the great lake reflects calmly and patiently the shining order of the midnight sky. He knows that he is doing intellectual justice to Christian faith. He knows that he has the power to take it in. He knows that its magnitude and splendor give range and lustre to his intelligence. So much he can say in favor of his belief.

The radical believer takes another step. He accustoms himself to imagine what the race would be without faith. He denudes the race of its faith in God, its belief in a moral order, its sense of obligation, its hope of endless life, its vision of Christ and his kingdom of love. He pictures

to himself what the racial intellect would be, if all high faith were extinguished ; what the racial heart would be, if all the sweet affections, all the generous sympathies, all the ennobling hopes, all the hallowed worlds of feeling inspired by Christianity, should be consumed ; what the racial will would be, if all the great incentives to righteousness originating in the Christian view of existence should be abolished ; what the racial instincts would become, if there could be no impact upon them through the consciousness of God, of the Holy Spirit. Thus the awful picture rises before the serious believer of a humanity denuded of its religious faith, bereaved of its ideals, shorn of its sovereign spiritual possession, robbed of its proper humanity, and smitten with everlasting sterility and sorrow. It is the vision of the living, beautiful, fruitful earth turned into a desert. The wilderness and the solitary place are everywhere. Death has taken the place of life, and the cheerful and hopeful world of men has sunk into the kingdom of the brute. Denude the earth of its forests, and you end its prevailing appeal to the clouds for the early and the latter rain, for seedtime and harvest, for the storms and tempests that keep it fruitful and beautiful ; denude the race of its highest expression, its fairest growth, its religious faith, and you deny to it the dews of heaven, you isolate it from the gracious

touch of the Infinite, you smite it with sorrow and despair.

The thoughtful believer takes still another step. When he has called in question the fundamental things of faith, turned religious vision into a dream, reduced the great insights of Christianity to an order of pious hallucinations, a system of beautiful but groundless imaginations, a benign but baseless fabric of poetic genius in the teeth and eyes of the inflexible, protesting reality of the world, he recalls one solemn obligation of the reasoner. He must not only pull down; he must also build up. He must not only deny the truth of belief; he must also prove the truth of his unbelief. Prove that there is no God. Prove that God is not good. Prove that there is no moral world, no moral universe. Prove that man is not under moral obligation to the Eternal. Prove that there is no permanence to the human spirit. Prove that the character of life here has no consequences of weal or woe beyond the grave. Prove that Jesus Christ and his vision and passion and influence do not tell the highest truth about man, and about man's universe. Prove our denial. That is impossible. If you could prove your denial, you would be omniscient, you would be God. Can you prove that this earth is the only world in infinite space that is the abode of life? Can you prove that there is intelligence nowhere in

the universe except in man? Can you prove that love beats only in the human heart? Can you prove your denial that love has in it the suggestion of the Infinite, as there is in day the reference to the "sweet approach of even or morn"? These propositions cannot be proved. They presuppose, in order to prove them, infinite knowledge. They may be true, and they may not; lower than that mood you cannot reasonably go.

At this point men fall back into the despair of knowledge, the despair of clear and reasonable opinion. They give up the problem of existence as beyond them, as beyond man. They take refuge in ignorance. They surrender the hope of a reasonable view of human life to absolute, unmitigable mystery. The race becomes an infant crying in the night, with no language but a cry. They cannot trust the full meaning of this comparison. They cannot see in man the power of the infant, the awakening, moving force of that cry; they cannot discern in the infant with no language but a cry, round whom the whole household is ordered in tender and anxious ministry, the suggestion that around the soul and its need, and in its pathetic, inarticulate appeals, there gathers a divine universe, and a love that can save even when it is not understood. This strange mood cannot last. It is an exaggeration of the frailty of man. We are not so badly off as an

infant crying in the night. It is a mood wanting in courage, and man is a being essentially courageous. When his hour comes, man can take his fate with composure and hope. He is born to contend, and not to surrender, to overcome, and not to suffer defeat. And a race conscious of the gift of insight, sensible of the growth of knowledge, aware of the marvelous rapidity with which at favorable moments nature yields up her eonian secrets, will not surrender because the puzzle is great, because the battle is severe. Agnosticism is doomed for these two reasons. First, it is an exaggeration of man's impotence. Second, it leaves no room for the full display of man's courage and hope. Man has in his long wrestle thrown a thousand giants supposed to be invincible. He will never own defeat. He will quail before no contest. He will wrestle the secret from the Infinite, as Jacob did, and in the morning light go forth, the possessor of an Eternal blessing.

To this, then, the intellectual problem of belief comes. Shall I march or refuse to march with my kind? Shall I or shall I not cast in my part with humanity as interpreted and as carried up out of the depths on to the heights by the supreme spirits of the race? What shall be my attitude toward the loftiest wisdom, the purest sentiment, the wisest and bravest character in

human history? Shall I decline to join this high fellowship? Shall I make light of the tremendous thing that it is for the individual man to go against the race at its best? Or shall I say: I was born a man, I suffer as a man, I love as a man, I go as a man under the heat and burden of the day, I shall die as a man. I have been a participant in the general life of my kind; let me become a communicant in the highest experiences of my race. Let me cast in my lot with man in everything worthy; let me cast in my lot with the humanity that entertains the heavenly vision, that repents, that obtains forgiveness, that lifts itself up in the moral grandeur of struggle and hope, that goes in the pathos of a mournful weakness, and in the solace of a quenchless faith?

II. What shall be the moral attitude toward this purified world of belief? In the text, on the part of the demons, it is fear; and I wish to show the moral dignity of that attitude. As belief implies that something is true, so fear implies that something is precious. If nothing were dear to man, and if what is dear were in no danger, there would be no place for fear. Life is smitten with fear because it is precious, and because it is under ceaseless menace. When the mother bends over her sick child, when she sees that child as a young man going into a strange city, when she sees his nature putting forth its

full power in the presence of a thousand seductions, when she is aware that he is bearing responsibilities heavier than man can endure, when she sends him into battle for his country, in each case she fears for him because he is dear to her, and because his life is in danger. And so it is throughout the animal kingdom, throughout the human kingdom, wherever you find these two things, — something that is precious, and what is precious in peril. Reasonable fear is the quickened pulse or the fever heat that sounds the alarm, that calls attention to grave conditions, to possible loss. Reasonable fear for others is the beacon light that flashes its warning to the mariner over the wild sea, or the fog-buoy that in the darkness moans its monotonous dirge. Precious is your life, therefore that wild pulse, that strange fire, must be heeded; precious is the life of others, therefore that solemn light, that mournful cry, must not be disregarded.

The fact that one is sinking as a moral value, that one is becoming less of a man, that the highest qualities in one's character are suffering, that in one's humanity one is losing strength and tone, is a legitimate object of fear. What shall we think of the man who is not afraid to lose worth, who has no dread of moral descent, to whom the brutal life that is coming upon him

by stealth is no horror? Can you think of any mood more degraded? Oh, the men who have no pity upon themselves, whose precious spiritual being is departing and who are without fear! As we look at them, we recall Christ's words: "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Men sorrow over the wrong things. They are grieved over material loss, over outward reverse and disaster. The nobler among them weep over the sorrows and losses of the good, and the tragedies that sometimes involve the sublimest lives. These are not properly objects of sorrow. These men have within their hearts the eternal consolations. Christ upon the cross did not weep for himself; his soul went out in pity for the poor, brutal men who were putting him to death: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Milton sings for all the brave when, in recounting his sorrows, he discovers his conquering sense of God and declares his singing voice

> "Unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
> On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
> In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
> And solitude; yet not alone while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
> Purples the east."

Fear of sin, fear of the loss of worth, fear of the loss of the ideal, fear of any surrender to

lust or shame, a deep-seated and abiding fear of the mutilation of one's humanity, of everything that hardens the heart, is a reasonable fear, and the man who is destitute of this fear is sinking into the kingdom of the brute.

The thought that one's family may lose in moral vigilance and vigor, that one's children may fail to live in their finer instincts, that they may miss the best training in conscience and in will, is surely something worthy of fear; the dread lest those for whose existence you are responsible shall grow up with no share in the world's best vision of God and man, with no participation in the world's highest feeling toward the universe and human life, with no place in the sublime fellowship of the servants of righteousness in all generations, with no communion with the saints and heroes of the earth, is surely enough to fill with anxiety the heart of the reasonable parent. What is the best thing that you can do for your children? Enable them to live in strength when you are gone. Make them able to meet with serious courage and hope the inevitable in existence. Accustom them to draw upon the Eternal for strength, serenity, and joy. Cultivate within them the habit of reasonable trust in God. Give your children faith in the moral meaning of existence, in the moral purpose of history, in the moral

character of God, and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the sovereign expression of these things.

When we look at our country, and still more when we regard our humanity in its relation to the universe, the same principle holds good. We are afraid of unrighteousness because we know that it will entail untold dishonor to the land that we love, inexpressible suffering to our kind. Job said : " When I consider, I am afraid." Serious thought over the preciousness to man of a noble soul, and a high bearing toward the Infinite in the heart of this seductive world, is surely troubled with fear. The mother is in perpetual subdued alarm over the helpless, prophetic infant in her arms. It is so precious and so frail, and a thousand terrors surround its life. When she considers, she is afraid ; and her fear is the impulse to a ministry that shields and saves. When we consider the unimaginable calamities that may issue from an evil will, from inhuman feeling, from wanton selfishness of any form ; when we allow the unmeasured possibilities of suffering as the consequence of iniquity to reflect their black and terrible character in the mind, when we try to calculate the whole awful issue of a loveless existence, it can only be with fear. And the depth of our fear will measure the height of our humanity. The man without

reasonable fear comes near being the worst of men. He cares neither for God nor his kind. The man who counts existence precious, and who sees the peril encompassing it, who loves his kind and who marks its temptations, must fear to do wrong, must tremble at the issues of wrong-doing, must pray that his mood and that of his brothers may be: How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

Thus belief and fear in the presence of the purified faith of mankind are a sign of intellectual power, and a witness of moral elevation. We dare to hope, even for the rich man who found himself in Hades and in torment, when we find him concerned about his brethren still living in the earth. There is hope for the man, in torment because of his sin, who still loves his brethren, and who desires to keep them out of that torment. The power to picture the stern truth of the universe, to feel the preciousness and the peril in the life of his kindred, his solemn apprehension of the immutable order of God, and his concern for those whom he has left in the upper world, lift Dives, in comparison with brutish men, into moral grandeur. How immeasurably higher in the scale of being this man is than those who have no beliefs about the moral order of the world, and who are without moral fear either for themselves or for their fellow-

men! How low down is intellectual inhospitality toward the highest moral faith; how repulsive is indifference to it! How near to the brute man descends when he loses the power to reflect the sovereign spiritual thought of the world, its purified vision of the meaning of man and his universe!

It is the brutish mind that is the tragedy of the world. The inhuman lives are the supreme sorrow. When they die who with their humanity have served humanity, we employ Milton's words, we give "immortal thanks." We cry with strong delight: —

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

When they live whose humanity has become inhumanity, whose mood has hardened into indifference to all faith and all righteousness, then we must grieve. That is the last and worst phase of man's career under the sun. The reason that is impotent in the presence of the highest religious thought and the conscience that is callous in the presence of the sovereign obligation of man are the lowest limit that human nature can reach. So long as men have intellect enough to reflect the august moral order of existence and conscience enough to fear it, so long as

they are not lower down than the demons of St. James, so long as upon the vision of the world's supreme insight and character they believe and tremble, there is ground for hope. Nothing but insensibility to the highest, insensibility hardening into permanence, is ultimately discouraging. A frozen, an extinct humanity is the really terrible abyss. Great wickedness with great sensibility of itself, and with great eagerness toward the highest, is at an immeasurable distance from the final horror of a dead humanity. "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Oh, how faith in the Highest expands and ennobles the intelligence! Oh, how awe in the presence of the Highest cleanses the soul, makes the thief ready, as by the renewing hand of God, for the great salutation and assurance: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

X

THE INHERITANCE OF FAITH

"Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers."
Ezra vii, 27.

When we first think of it, faith seems to be something with which sentiment and tradition have absolutely nothing to do. Faith is the personal vision of God. The vision of other men, of other generations, would seem to have little to do with this personal beholding of the Eternal. Can any dearest friend see or hear, taste or handle, for one? If one is blind, what avails it that other men see? If one's eyes are wide open upon the beauty of the world, what need is there for pondering the things that other eyes have seen? Is not the sight of the eyes independent of history? And is not the sight of the soul independent of the past? If God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, need we consider what He has been to other generations? Is not faith born anew in the personal soul? Is not God sufficient as He stands in the vision of the individual mind? Is not the idea of the inheritance of faith a contradiction, like the idea of the inherited knowledge of Greek, or

mechanics, or navigation, or war, or any other subject that men master by personal effort? Is not faith a kind of inspiration, and, as in breathing, must not every man gain it for himself? What addition can be made to the reasonableness and power of belief in God, by confessing Him as the Lord God of our fathers?

When the sun comes up in the east and floods the world with light, and when it goes down in the west and leaves the world transfigured in its evening glow, we think mainly, if not exclusively, of the sun. We lift our thought to the light, we give thanks for the light, we praise it, and we rejoice in it. And all that is well, but it is not the whole truth or the true attitude toward the phenomenon. The sun comes through leagues of soft and sweet and wholesome and blessed atmosphere, the atmosphere in which our world rolls and lives, and through the service of the atmosphere there is daily wrought the miracle of morning and evening. God is the sovereign reality of the universe; the thought of God is the sovereign thought of mankind. It is the master light of all our seeing; it is the illumination and consolation of the race. And we do well, when we think of life's last refuge and beauty, to lift our thought to the Infinite Father of men. And yet this is not the whole truth. God comes to the individual believer through

the race of believers; He comes through our humanity, through its need, its aspiration, its love, its struggle, its sorrow, its tears, its hope; through its pathos and its prophecy; its whole sphere, its whole history. The heart, not of the individual man, but of the historic man, is the great prism in which is unfolded the glory of God.

We stand in a great solidarity of distress. Because we are men, we inherit defect and disability of many kinds, we inherit ills of various sorts, we are fated to certain woes, and we are doomed to death. The words of Paul are forever sounding in our ears, "As in Adam all die!" All die because all stand in solidarity with the first man. This half-truth is to-day crushing the heart out of thousands. Men see the inheritance of sorrow and nothing else; they read the doom of death and nothing more. The race has power to transmit the reign of sorrow, it has the power to perpetuate the authority of death. "As in Adam all die" is the half-truth under which men to-day groan. Why not recognize the other half of the truth? We stand in a solidarity of privilege. We inherit health and vigor. We inherit a world whose productive power has been heightened under the cultivation of many generations. In a large sense we inherit the ways and means of doing business, the ways and means of living; we in-

herit the deepest wisdom, the purest sentiment, the highest ideals, of the loftiest souls of all time. We inherit the capacity for love, the love of man and the love of God. We inherit our religion. Before it becomes ours through personal choice and character, we belong to it by descent. It becomes ours by personal endeavor; we are its children by nature. It is in our blood and bone, our brain and tissue. Our being is alive with the benign power of a historic religion. We are in debt to the race; it is an infinite debt. It is, therefore, unjust to say that we stand only in a solidarity of pain. We stand in a solidarity of sorrow and of joy, in the discipline and in the hope, in the struggle and in the conquest, of existence. The whole truth is this: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

There are two great tendencies of our nature that seem to me very significant and beautiful, the tendency toward our kindred and the tendency toward our kindred's God. These tendencies are not fatalistic. They do not exclude self-direction. They are the basis of it.

1. There is the tendency toward our kindred. It is a movement of heart full of utmost richness, utmost meaning, and with a divine depth of tenderness in it. It has three epochs. The child is the example of the first epoch. It lives

and moves and has its being in its home, in its mother's love, in its father's strength. How easily it looks at the world through parental eyes! How easily it thinks as its father and mother think, feels as they feel, takes on the tone of their thought and the color of their character! How easily it is moulded by them into the spirit of the home! And I need not pause to remark the world of joy and strength that comes out of this discipline to the fortunate child, or the world of delight and solace that comes out of it to the wise and reverent parent.

Childhood is succeeded by youth. Here is the second epoch in this tendency. In youth there is, however it may be disguised or chastened or sweetened, a temporary alienation from parental life. New worlds dawn upon youth, new interests, new fascinations, new friendships, bright worlds into which the young soul passes. However fine and true and tender the young soul may be, there is a decided alienation from the dear, early home. The vast and beautiful world of love opens to the young; they pass into it with music in their hearts. Father and mother are no longer all-sufficing; the son and daughter found homes for themselves. The time was when the old home with father and mother in it was the centre of existence, and now it has become incidental. The new home is the centre of existence, and

all other interests and relations wait upon this. There is this undeniable, inevitable, pathetic alienation of the dear heart of childhood from father and mother. Childhood has become youth, and has gone into another world, a world of its own. It is all as it should be. It is inevitable. This process, however, presents the supreme problem of life. How the passage is made, in what spirit, from the old world into the new, is of infinite moment to youth.

There is the third epoch. This describes the return to the old home. The young mother, in the presence of her growing children, with the urgent, anxious problems of her family forever before her, standing under the burden of her responsibility to these souls, — how inevitably she goes back to her own mother, whether living or dead, communes with her in spirit, raises from the grave worlds of forgotten wisdom, and recovers so far as she can all the healing, influential ways of that vanished mother! The father lives anew in the maturing manhood of his son. Twenty or thirty years after the father is in the unseen world, his intellect and will, his wisdom and courage, his hope and power, are the resource and power of his son. In the strength of his dead father the son is able to run through a troop and to leap over a wall. Whether in the flesh or in the spirit only, the son is again

in the early home, talking with his father. And this goes on to the end of life. We spend our last years in reuniting our separated lives with the beloved who are gone, in making fast our souls to the dear souls from whom we have been parted. An old man of ninety-five was once asked how the distant past seemed to him. The old man replied: "Every night when I retire I can hear my mother's voice, I can feel her touch, and I can hardly believe that more than a few years have intervened since I was a child under her heavenly care." We recall the exquisite touch with which Ian Maclaren closes his description of the doctor of the old school. He is dying, and his wandering thoughts are back with his mother. He is a boy again, in the early home, learning his psalm that he may repeat it to his mother, calling to her when he thinks that he has it, and going hence at her side with the great whisper upon his lips: "And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be." And that you may not think this is mere fancy, let me remind you of Carlyle's last hours as reported by the nephew and niece who were with him, and who cared for him with great tenderness. When the old man was dying, he thought his niece was his beautiful mother once more by his side; he put his arms round her, spoke to her as to his mother, and wept as in a mother's

consoling and hallowing presence. He took his nephew for his father, and spoke again as in the noble presence of the old mason of Ecclefechan. Carlyle at eighty-five is dying, not in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London, but in the humble home in that little village in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. And this return we all make, when we are true to our humanity. We all come back at last to our kindred; we are finally gathered to our fathers, as in the pathetic and wondrous words of the Bible. We begin our being in home, in the heart of it. For a little we are alienated from that early home because we have founded one of our own. Then by the high and solemn interest of our new home, by its burden, its sanctity, and its hope, we are brought back to the voice that we first heard, and to the heart that first loved us. If Rachel still weeps for her children, she shall not weep forever. If she still refuses to be comforted because they are not, she shall not be comfortless forever. They shall come again to her, they shall gather round her, they shall greet her with their bright eyes and their true hearts, they shall be with her again, and with her forever.

2. There is the other tendency of which I spoke, the tendency to return to our father's God and to rest in Him. For religion is as natural toward the Eternal as love in our homes. It is

the feeling for the Infinite to whom we stand as creature to Creator, as dependent to Absolute, as child to the Eternal Father. That there should be feeling of a certain kind for God is as natural, as inevitable, as that there should be feeling of a certain kind for a father or mother. And that we should go with our kindred here, that we should discover a tendency to trust and serve the Lord God of our fathers, is surely not at all strange. Here again we note, in a general way, three epochs.

Look at the child once more. It lives in the life of its parents. It looks out upon the world through their eyes. It beholds the universe in their vision. It kneels with them in prayer; its first devout utterance is through the Lord's Prayer. It is led in reverence to Jesus as the great Teacher. It unfolds its life in the consciousness of God. It lives and moves and has its being in the circle of Christian faith; it accepts God as it accepts the common heritage of existence. Kindred is one of the precious facts in the existence of the fortunate child. With the sense of kindred comes the happy experience of good, the consciousness of life as beloved. And God, the lover of children, their defender and friend, is bound up with the deep and loving hearts of kindred. In this way the normal and fortunate child comes to believe in God.

How natural religion is to such a child! How easily its mind is turned into the stream of a mother's devotion! How easily and completely it joins in the reverence and faith of the home! How thoroughly such a child feels that religion is part of the life of the home, that God is the soul of the world's order, beauty, and being! How touching it is to listen to the prayers of a child! They are so real. They so completely carry the child into the divine world. This is the first epoch. The child awakes in the deep, sweet, mystic sense of the Lord God of its fathers. This God is part of its treasure; He is to be loved, trusted, rejoiced in, as the song-bird rejoices in the deep, infinite sunshine.

Then follows youth, and this child-religion is transcended. I have never known a person in whom there was not some kind of a break with the past when youth came. The social world is one great disturber. It absorbs the young life, feeds it with excitements that make religious feeling less apt to flow, that make religious feeling seem tame when it does flow. The world of books and of intellectual problems rushes in to engage and to perplex the awakening mind. The youth begins to question and to doubt. A negative mood takes the place of the old positive faith, and a cold heart waits upon this negation. The world of business puts in its great claim.

Manhood has a struggle here. New prospects dawn upon youth. New ambitions rise in its heart; glorious seas of passion come beating in, as from the Infinite. Here is a world to be conquered, to be possessed, to be enjoyed. It tends to break up that old world of childhood; it is apt to throw into insignificance the realities of faith. Religion gives way to a strenuous humanity; it is not distinctly seen among the forces that make up the great, seething world of youth. Religion, at this period, for many of our finest youth, fades into a memory, — a sweet, a gracious, a hallowing memory, but only a memory. Time, sense, temporal ends, earthly interests, worldly ambitions, human tastes, attainments, passions, and hopes make the troubled but tremendous world of youth.

One thing must be said here. The problem presented at this period of transition is one of the most fundamental and vital in human existence. Whether we shall be victorious or defeated, successes or wrecks; whether our humanity shall be a blessing to us or a curse; whether all the grace and melody shall go out of it, or it shall become richer in great, singing voices with the passing years, depends upon how we go into our new world of enterprise, of thought, of love and joy and suffering. Shall we master this new world in the name of the Highest? Shall

we possess and govern it in the name of the ideal? There is no deeper or more vital question than that. Look at that fair young woman floating out from the piety of her kindred into an enchanting world of her own. Is she to go from good to better, from better to best; or is she to become a poor, soiled butterfly on the dusty ways of life? Look at that young man going forth radiant and resolute as the morning? Is he going to victory or defeat?

The third epoch is dependent upon our behavior in this second epoch. If we keep truth with ourselves during this period of alienation from the historic Christian faith, if in the world of our wild and serious interests we keep our heart with all diligence, if in this scene of confusion and contamination we strive for the life of the undefiled, if we attain to what we call our God, our ideal, our governing and consoling faith, we shall at length begin a return to our fathers' God. In that historic faith, in that high religious experience, in that supreme life of our race, we shall find ourselves at our best. We shall find there, deep in the holiest heart of our kindred, our kind, the sanctuary of our souls. We shall find there the infinite solace and peace.

As we deepen in humanity, as our best sympathies grow and come to the command of our being, as we become greater and finer in the ser-

vice of man, we shall inevitably, in one way or another, become sharers in the best life of our kind. As the burden of the good and pure heart grows heavier, it becomes as natural to believe in God as it was when we first spoke his name at our mother's side. When things are as they should be, we gravitate toward God as the falling body gravitates toward the earth. His reality then comes upon us with an amazing sweetness and an overwhelming convincingness. Time, that takes away so much, may leave us with the sense of closer, surer, happier life in the dear life of God, our fathers' God, the God of our kindred and our kind, in whose strength we were born, in whose love we were nurtured, in whose being our minds were formed through the gracious humanities of home before we awoke to the problem and sorrow of the individual will. To come back to that faith, deep, vast, tender, sublime with the testimony of the supreme spirits of the race behind it, with the record of all the triumphant sons and daughters of sorrow set in its light, is a return which may be made by every man. Oh, that journey back to the Eternal Father, back to the Lord God of our fathers, back to the Heart out of which came the hearts of our fathers and mothers, back to the aboriginal source of all love, all tenderness, and all hope! What a return is that! Our human-

ity at its best came from God, and when it is true to its deepest tendency, it returns to Him.

Both of these tendencies of which I have spoken receive illustration and sanction from our Master's life. He was a child; he lived in his mother's world. Then came his own vast world, of which he took possession by the spirit of his Father. On the cross he returned to the dear world into which he was born, his mother's world, and whispered from the centres of pain: "Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother." Is it not profoundly moving and profoundly beautiful to see Jesus dying in the strength of the old home in Nazareth? Then there is the other return. Jesus was the flower of a great race, its consummate expression; and another of the great utterances that fell from his dying lips was this: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These are words from one of the Psalms, repeated before him by many generations of the wise and brave of his race. Back to his mother's home and heart; back to his mother's God, to the Lord God of his fathers, Jesus came; and in the strength of an historic humanity transfigured in the life of God, no less than in the strength of his own spotless soul, he went as the sun goes when the day is done.

I sometimes think that we do not know the

stuff of which we are made. Oh, the fires of love within, hidden and unsuspected, the slumbering music, the unawakened manhood! Oh, the unsounded depths of this rich, dear, and awful humanity that God has given us! How cheap we hold our priceless possession! How far we travel, seeking good, and forgetting the angel at our door, the Divine presence in our own being! When this mysterious humanity stirs within us, let us wait upon it. This stir is our life and our hope. When the tide sets back to our fathers, let us go with it; when, with deep, silent strength, it sets toward our fathers' God, let us begin upon it the great return.

XI

THE GRACE OF KINDNESS

"And be ye kind one to another."

Ephesians iv, 32.

WHAT is the highest human excellence? If you should put that question to a group of men and women, you would note in the replies that might be made a very great difference of opinion. Some would say one thing, some another. Put the question to a normal child, anywhere on the face of the earth, and there could be but one answer. Go back into the fair morning of your life, recall the time when the world was new, when everything came to you in the mystery of fresh experience, and ask the question, Who were they that interested and delighted you most in that golden age?

Personally, I have done that a hundred times. I have gone back into the morning of life, and looked again upon the men and women who then compassed me about. There were men and women saintly, truly so, and I regret to say that I did not like them. There were the supremely conscientious persons, whose worth and grandeur I can now see, and they impressed me then as

among the gloomiest and most unattractive people in the world. They took the brightness out of the day, the zest out of life. There were the men of courage, and they were better. This fault, however, I found in them : a scorn of weakness, a careless contempt of children. Then came the patriots, the men who loved their country with a great love, and who filled my mind with inspiring tales of their country's power and majesty. I remember the passionate interest with which I listened to these tales, although I must confess that I had my doubts about the truth of some of these glorious traditions. But high above all the persons of that early period are the kind people. I can see them, at the far end of a long vista, with the light of God shining in their faces. There they remain in that silent world, images of beauty and humanity, wearing looks that then seemed, and that still seem, the best symbol of heaven, playmates, some of them forever vanished and yet unforgettable ; dear old mothers and grandmothers, who were fascinating simply because of their unweariable kindness. The king of them all was an old soldier, who had fought through the Crimean war, and from whom, during the long, long days of the happiest of all the summers of my life, I never received anything but kind looks, kind words, and kind deeds. How this man could be so kind

for so long a time has always seemed to me an inscrutable mystery. The man whom a child, from sunrise to sunset, cannot torment into an unkind look or word or act is a great man. Such a man was the king of the realm of my childhood. I have seen again and again the meadows in which he toiled, and in their lonely loveliness lives the beauty of his spirit; I have wandered among the farm-buildings where he spent so much of his time, and the silent and vacant places still seemed to belong to him. I have stood by the river on whose banks he sowed and reaped, and the ceaseless rush of the waters over their stony bed seemed to be a kind of requiem for the repose of his soul. What is the highest human excellence? All the children in all the world answer, Kindness. Lift this answer and call it Christian kindness, and I believe it will stand as the final answer.

In considering the Grace of Kindness we can, perhaps, best get at the heart of the matter by asking, and by trying to answer, certain questions.

1. The first question is, What is kindness? The word is one of the very greatest in our language. It has suffered a good deal from misuse. It has lost something of its strength and dignity from careless tongues. It is sometimes employed to denote the inoffensiveness of a useless person, the gush of a mere sentimentalist, the ready and

happy assent of an individual whose desire is to sit still, or the emotional excess of perfect physical health. There are persons whose physical existence is so perfect, and whose pleasure in themselves is so abundant, that the overflow of their emotions is sometimes mistaken for kindness.

We must recover this great word to its natural meaning. Kindness stands for the feeling of one for his race, and that feeling the highest; it stands for one's interest in one's kind, and that interest the loftiest. Kindness implies in a man toward men an attitude of the intelligence, an attitude of the heart, an attitude of the will. The kind man holds in a considerate intelligence the lives of other men and their varying fortunes in this world. The kind man holds in a pure and sympathetic heart the rights and wrongs of other men under the burden and heat of the day, and their joys and sorrows. The kind man has a grave and humane purpose; that is the attitude of his will toward his race. He is full of respect, full of honor, full of high consideration for his fellow men. The thoughts and feelings and purposes of the kind man have in them a sweet reasonableness, a healing grace, a high benignity. Kindness is the seed and the flower of all human excellence; it is like the seed from which the magnolia-tree comes, and it is like the flower into which that tree lifts itself in the early days

of June. It is the great, vital expression of all excellence, the deepest root of the noblest humanity, and its consummate flower.

We can all see that it implies fellow-feeling, racial sympathy, family love set free from family limits and encircling the world. And this primary element of racial sympathy may be either natural or acquired. All men do not possess it naturally, in any large way. All may possess it. The man who wrote the Odyssey, for example, had a natural delight in human beings. Those gods and goddesses, so full of faults, are yet warm and rich, and often beautiful with humanity. His women charm forever, — Nausicäa and Penelope. Read again the eleventh chapter of the Odyssey, and note once more this man's deep, pathetic, and mystic interest in man and man's world. Shakespeare's world is a world of human beings. Part of the witchery of his genius is in making us share something of his insight into man's world and his delight in it. The songs of Burns, — what are they but jets from the perennial fountain of his humanity?

There are many high souls to whom this interest in man is not native. Wordsworth says of Milton: "Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart." Milton was not naturally kind. He was austere, majestic, solitary, exceptional in his tastes and character. If he ever became kind, it

was through achievement. And Wordsworth himself was not naturally fond of human beings. He loved the hills, the meadows, the streams, and the rainbow that comes and goes; he preferred the great solitudes and the sweet and austere voices of nature to those of man. He came, indeed, to sing of the "still sad music of humanity," but this he did through discipline and achievement. And supreme in this class stands the author of the text, — Paul. He was naturally exclusive. He went for years in the proud consciousness that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was proud, self-conscious, masterful, magnificent, as a Pharisee, but he was not kind. It was the vision of Jesus Christ that made this aristocratic soul one of the most democratic that ever lived. One can imagine the strangeness to him of his Lord's command, "Behold, I send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." "What? To the Gentiles? Not to my own nation? Not even to the Samaritans?" "No; but to Greeks and Romans, Barbarians and Scythians, bond and free; I have chosen you to be the far-sighted and deep-hearted servant of the whole race." Paul was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. And to-day he stands, as he will forever stand, an example of the racial sympathy that is the primary force in kindness.

The second thing in kindness is the sense of the greatness and pathos of human life. The sense of the greatness of life comes first. Life is so great from every point of view, — its achievement, loss, sin, capacity, hope, — that the poetry which prefers nature to man seems to me mere vaporing. Man's world is so intrinsically and tragically great that one finds it difficult to tolerate the writers who abandon humanity for nature. They are indeed seekers after strange gods, with a sad and wanton perversity in them. Take science. It is the one word for the vastness, the order, and the splendor of the physical universe. Certain persons cry out, How little is man in the presence of the universe unveiled by science! Yes, and how great is the intelligence that has discovered that same universe! The universe of science is first of all the shadow of man's greatness. Every extension of the boundaries of science is a new witness to the magnitude of man.

There is literature. How great is literature, English, German, Italian, Greek, and, above all, Hebrew literature! What a wondrous thing is the literature, the classic literature, of the world! And in its final meaning, what is it but the witness to the tragic and transcendent greatness of man? When we appeal to the fine arts, do they not all sing the same song? Poetry, music, paint-

ing, sculpture, building, — can you call the race other than great that has articulated its thought and sentiment, its intelligence and passion, in forms so high and beautiful?

There is, too, the world of industry. As an organization of the instinctive reason of man it is amazing. Kipling calls the ships that carry the commerce of the world the flying shuttles of the loom that is weaving into one many peoples. Vast wrongs, needless sufferings, are inflicted by man upon man in the world of trade; yet trade is a civilizer. The great loom is forever active; these flying shuttles are threaded with something finer than greed, they are threaded with the sense of man's needfulness to man; they are moving to and fro over the wide earth; the fabric that is slowly issuing is the unity of the race, and the pattern in this fabric is the brotherhood of our kind. This Institute of trade that at special points is so inhuman, that over wide fields of activity appears so wanting in moral worth, that in general seems sometimes to be a scene of wild and endless contention, an embodiment of mad egoism, and yet of an egoism whose madness is under severe restraint in order that it may the more completely plunder and desolate, is other and greater than we know. It is set in the moral order of the world; it is set for the help of man. It is one vast expression of the instinctive reason

of the race; it is one of the most impressive witnesses to the greatness of mankind. Civilization as the sum of the material and spiritual acquisitions of man is a monumental witness to the dignity of human life. Survey this achievement, and you will, with the Hebrew Psalmist, assert the sovereign place of man in the universe; survey it, and you will with him declare that God has made man only a little lower than himself.

The kind man carries about with him the sense of the majesty of the race to which he belongs. He is grateful that he was born a human being, happy to have been made a sharer in the ideals, the sympathies, the hopes of a great race, glad to think and love and serve as the inheritor of sublime achievements.

There is, however, another side. There is the pathos of life. Burke's great words are an image of life: "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" The greatness of man is in part the greatness of a tragedy. Agamemnon, Antigone, Hamlet, Lear, are poor in the presence of the eonian misunderstanding, perversity, conflict, heartbreak, defeat, and death of humanity. These classic dramas are windows through which the student looks upon the tragic world; the world itself is beyond, wide-reaching, wild, mysterious, terrible with woe.

It is the function of tragedy to excite pity and

thus to purify the heart. The kind man cannot look upon this vast scene of error and pain without pity. His heart is moved with compassion. He beholds the sorrow of the world; it becomes his sorrow. It is this that makes him the pure and tender friend that he is. He lives near to the suffering souls of his fellow men; he sees the wreck and the heartbreak in life; he notes the swiftly passing beauty of it all, —

> "like the rainbow's lovely form
> Evanishing amid the storm," —

and his compassionate heart elects to suffer with his kind and wait in benign pity upon its need.

There is still another element in kindness that we must note, — service. This is the meaning of the Good Samaritan story. The Priest and the Levite may have had many virtues, although no record of this possession has come down to us, but there was one thing in which they were deficient, and that one thing was kindness. They refused help to a fellow man in distress. They refused it in the name of religion; they count for nothing, and they stand for those who count for nothing in the holy and humane service of man. Whatever his defects, the Good Samaritan had this one superlative excellence: he knew an unfortunate human being when he saw him, he knew, when he heard it, the divine

call of humanity, he knew, when it confronted him, the supreme privilege of his life, and he took the bleeding victim of robbery and outrage, poured oil and wine into his wounds, set him on his own beast, carried him to an inn, took out two pence and gave them to the host, and closed the service of compassion with this fine charge and pledge: "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee."

2. The second question has been somewhat anticipated in these last words: What is the special power of kindness? We break new ground, however, in answering this question. The special power of kindness is that it abolishes a world of pain, and brings into the vacant place a world of joy. There is so much irremediable suffering in the world. There are so many bodily ills that cannot be cured or even alleviated, so many mental troubles that cannot be removed or even mitigated, so many sorrows that cannot be done away or even sweetened. That tragic world we wander in, helpless, or nearly helpless. That world of woe must be rolled back upon the heart of God. It is his problem, and we cannot doubt that He will meet it to the supreme satisfaction of every reasonable soul. That world of irremediable pain we leave with Him; we await his dealing with it.

There is a world of pain that need not be; a world born of sour looks, ungracious speech, unmanly action, a world that harrows the hearts of millions. Kindness wipes that vast and dismal world out of existence.

We read about fashionable society. We hear that in London, Paris, Berlin, and Boston there is such society. We hear that certain persons are anxious to get into this society, and if half that is said of its spirit is true, these persons might with more safety cherish a desire to get into a nest of hornets. Oh, the lies that people tell of one another! Oh, the cruel falsehoods that they utter and scatter! The power to sting, to inflict pain, to add to the burden and misery of life, is carefully cultivated, and the methods by which it works reduced to a fine art.

What is the trouble with our family life? Unkindness. What is the bane of business life? Unkindness. What is the central shame of our American social life? Unkindness. Job had his Satan — accusing him, dogging his steps with suspicion and unbelief, smiting him first in his property, second in his family, and last in his health, snatching from him in the end his capacity for resistance, taking as it were the rudder from the ship, after having destroyed her power of propulsion. This same Satan, in the form of unkindness, is still walking to and fro in the

earth, unbelieving, cynical, frivolous, heartless, relentless, and armed with power to afflict and curse mankind.

Kindness meets this vast and lurid world of needless pain, and annihilates it. Kindness destroys its sources. Kindness abolishes sour looks, malicious speech, wicked deeds; and where these do not exist, that world of needless pain cannot come into being. When the sun is low, winter comes, and the earth is dead, and the streets are cold; and while winter reigns, multitudes lead a shivering existence. When the sun is high, the world of winter vanishes; the world of summer comes, with its song-birds, its blossoming trees, its opening flowers, its green earth, and its happy humanity. Kindness is like the sun. Its absence means a frost, a killing frost; it means blight and gloom; it means a world of pain that need not be imposed upon a world of pain that must be. It means day-labor, light denied, — the light of human sympathy and brotherhood. Everything that Midas touched became gold. Everything that the kind man touches becomes bright with tender and shining humanity. Everywhere that the kind man goes he brings into being priceless things, — golden sympathies, radiant faces, glowing and grateful hearts. The kind man, the kind woman, is the magician for whom the world waits.

3. Finally, how shall we increase this form of human excellence? In many ways this can be done, but chiefly by living with the Lord Jesus Christ. He took twelve quarrelsome fishermen, subdued them to his own spirit, and sent them forth apostles of kindness. Jesus is himself the incarnation of kindness. Look at his human sympathy. When he appeared among men, the world was divided into Jews and Samaritans and Gentiles. The Jews were divided into Sadducees and Pharisees, publicans and sinners. Inside these divisions there were others still, bitter as death. Jesus overswept all these unhallowed limits. He took the whole world to his heart. Look at his delight in men. He loved men, — Levi the publican, Zaccheus the publican, Nicodemus the ruler, and Joseph of Arimathea, the family at Bethany, the weary race of sorrowing mothers and their sick sons and daughters, and the little children. You cannot think of the Teacher who took the children into his arms and blessed them as other than fond of the race of which he was the head. And did he not have a sense of the greatness and pathos of life? What are his words for these aspects of our existence? Sons of God! There is the greatness of men. And Jesus has lifted Christendom into the sense of sonhood to God. That Christian consciousness of aboriginal and inalienable sonhood to

God has broken up and swept away a whole system of theology opposed to it, notwithstanding fifteen centuries of existence and influence. Sons of God by the native dignity of the soul; that is Jesus' way of declaring his sense of the greatness of man. And for the pathos of life hear his words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." His life is the ideal of service. He went about doing good. He was the sunshine of the world.

Think of this mind that held in such divine regard all orders and conditions of men, — little children, frail women, invalids, sinners, outcasts, all classes of human beings, just as the great sky holds in its serene heart the entire earth. We should be willing to rest the supremacy of Jesus upon the sovereignty of his concern for mankind. He had greater consideration for the world than any one else, a diviner sympathy, and his whole life was pitched upon the key of service. His ministry as the ideal expression of his mind and heart has won for him among all reasonable and aspiring spirits recognition as the leader and master of men. To live with Jesus Christ, to be subject to his soul; that is the great assurance of kindness. And the more intimately and devoutly we live with him, the swifter and surer will be our growth in kindness.

What is our religion? It is the grace of

the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. What is our religion? It is the loving-kindness and tender mercy of God revealed to the world in the teaching, ministry, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is our religion? It is the loving-kindness of Jesus Christ as the assurance of the tender mercy of the Most High. We have a human God, one whose highest attribute is not justice, but kindness, not supreme regard for law, but supreme concern for man.

XII

THE GREAT QUESTION

What is your life?

James iv, 14.

A GREATER question than this no man can put to himself, no man can put to another. The question concerns the real and not the conventional man, therefore the conventional answers do not meet the case. Wealth, position, learning, power, fame, significant for the undiscerning, are superficial. The real man is in the depths, the infinite depths. We are inquiring now not for the pomp and circumstance of existence, but for its essential and veritable character. We wish to know not its dress, but itself, its inmost heart.

The writer from whom the words of the text are taken gives one answer: "What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." What he meant by this comparison we may perhaps discern in the feeling of another writer upon life. Dr. John Brown, in his inimitable "Rab and his Friends," describes with the fidelity of science and with the pathos of a Christian the

death of the old carter's wife, Ailie. The old man is not sure whether his beloved wife is still with him. There is no pulse at the wrist. The beat of the heart cannot be heard. He takes a mirror and holds it before the parted lips of the dying woman. One small spot of dimness appears on it, and no more. The faithful mirror has caught the final breath. What is your life? It is a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. That is one answer, and all human history attests its great and pathetic truth.

That is, however, only one answer among many. What is your life? Just what you please to make it. It is your life, it is largely in your own hands. You can make it a thing of honor or of shame, a blessing or a curse, a fountain of joy or a burden of woe, a centre of light or a source of gloom. You are the master of your fate; you are lord of yourself. You may become believer or unbeliever, theist, atheist, agnostic, Christian, Buddhist, materialist. You may adopt any theory of existence that you please; you may conform your existence to whatever standard you like. You are free to make your life high or low, fine or coarse, full of love or full of brutality. You are free in this greatest of all the processes of experimentation; but you must abide by the

inevitable result. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God is not mocked. Be not deceived. We must not think to sow to the flesh and to reap to the Spirit. Sowing and reaping are always in one and the same kind. The courses of conduct that gratify the beast in man will never issue in the power of the Spirit. Choose your standard; act under it; then face the inevitable. When all the restrictions upon freedom that go with heredity general and special, and environment universal and particular, are noted, it is still true that life is what we choose to make it. The loom is here, ready for our use; the thread is here, awaiting our industry; the shuttle is here, too, in the inevitable impulsive soul; but the pattern in the interest of which the loom runs, the shuttle flies, and the threads are woven, each man must supply. The character in the piece is from the weaver, and not from the machine. The controlling purpose is from the soul, and not from its circumstances; and it is this purpose that gives character to life. In the presence of this freedom, at once precious and perilous, I shall name four answers to our question.

1. We take first the best possible answer. What is your life? It is an existence of moral worth, without flaw, clear, pure, shining, golden worth. We can imagine a man so good that he

is able to make that reply. Evil thoughts come not near him. Base feelings find no room in his heart. Selfish designs and a self-seeking career are foreign to him. His thoughts are true, his feelings are reverent, his purposes are high, his conduct is like the Lord's robe, without seam, consistent, whole, and wholly good. If one might borrow an image from the life of some planet, his life is not fire-mist, it is not solidity in heat and darkness. It is all light, all fire, pure, burning splendor, such an existence as Dante beheld in Paradise. It is goodness, goodness everywhere, and nothing but goodness. Such a character is at least conceivable.

Is such a character only a dream? We know well that few among the sons of men answer to this description. Looking over the Old Testament, considering only the greater names of a great race, one might place here Moses, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, among historical characters, and perhaps ideal persons like Joseph and Daniel. Perhaps one might place here the best of a great civilization, and again perhaps not. It may be that they belong elsewhere. Should the chief among the first disciples stand here? It is difficult to say. Looking over the wide fields of history, one might consider suitable for this category Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Buddha. We are sure that one should be placed

here, and we are completely sure of no other, — Jesus Christ.

Even upon the most generous judgment, how few among the children of men can be classed as men of pure, clear, unalloyed worth! Let us be thankful for the few. They are the great moral reserve of our humanity, like the gold which is the reserve of our national currency. Think of the volume of business done in this land every day, every year, and how seldom you see a gold coin passing from hand to hand. Business is largely done in paper, in check or bill; only now and then a gold eagle, a double eagle, appears. But in all this transaction through paper we know that the gold is in reserve, and that it holds solid and sure the financial system of the entire country. Few are the worthful among us, yet are we thankful for the few. They hold us to the sense of the strength and dignity which belong to the race, and to which we may come. We are thankful for Jesus Christ, who throughout Christendom lives in the vision of all men as the perfect human worth. What a boon it is to be able to think of him as the great reserve, the great backer, the great assurance, the golden basis of humanity's life, struggle, and hope! "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." When the ship is caught

offshore in storm and tempest, she takes the anchor that is part of herself and drops it into the wild deep beyond her. There it finds the rock, and there it holds her till the storm abates and the sea is calm. So we find Christ, the stay and assurance of man. We are caught in the gales of passion, doubt, meanness, brutality. We wonder if faith in the intrinsic nobility of man can live. We fling out of our own heart our confidence in the divine humanity of Jesus, and through the wild sea on which we are tossed that confidence sinks, anchor-like, till it finds him. Such is the worth to weak and sinful men of the flawless goodness of the Master of the Christian world.

2. We come now to the answer that is second best. What is your life? An issue of useful work.' This answer covers more. There are many men whose thoughts are not all true, whose feelings are not all noble, whose purposes and actions are not all high, who nevertheless are the great and good servants of their kind. You may deny Cromwell a place in the first class; you cannot deny him a place in the second class. Think of that life, and its high utility to the political life of mankind! You may deny Lincoln a place in the first order; you cannot deny him a place in the second. Again it is true that the soul of the man went forth in a great

service. Here Luther stands. He was a man of many imperfections, yet has he done the world an immeasurable service.

Here we place our elect citizens. The maker of a wholesome human home belongs here; for that is a public, a racial utility. The man who carries on a great and honorable business belongs here, for he is an immense utility to mankind. Those who sow and those who reap, those who raise and those who gather the crops of the earth, those who direct the manufacturing energy of the country, those who run its carrying power by land and by sea, in a sense belong here. Their lives are indispensable to an ongoing world; and if you and I think it is good to live, good to have a living world, we should be willing to confess that they who keep the world alive are at least useful. The beloved physician belongs here, the just jurist, the journalist who aims to create and to maintain a sound public opinion, the educator who brings to bear upon the successive generations of youth a strong and a benign manhood.

When the farmer brings home from his orchard the fruits of the season, and looks carefully over what he has gathered, he sees indeed only a few perfect apples; but he sees a great many that are useful. And when you survey mankind, you find few indeed upon whom you

can put without qualification the mark of worth, but you find many whom you can describe by the honorable term of usefulness.

3. We must now listen to the third best answer. What is your life? It aims at the highest, it means well most of the time, it pursues, haltingly indeed, but with a sad sincerity, a lofty ideal. This, I think, covers more than either of the other two answers. Indeed, I am inclined to put in this class the majority of those whom we respect and love.

I spoke of the apostles as belonging in the first order of men, perhaps. Surely they must be put, if anywhere below the first order, in the second. Yet the chief among them placed himself in the third order. He thus describes his career, "not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: . . . but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul's greatness lies in the intention, movement, direction of his life, and not in its attainment.

That makes one breathe more freely. If this hero of the faith belongs in the third order, the whole order is hallowed by him. What an order it is! It is composed of the men who make no pretenses because they know that none are justi-

fiable ; of those who are seekers after truth, who move in a great quest, who have in their vision the ends that strengthen and console the race. To belong here is high honor, to move in the tides of humanity represented by the men of this order, faint yet pursuing, baffled but not defeated, set back but, like the stream behind the dam, gathering volume and force to go on again. How great and deep and full of God this is! It is not the best ; it is not the second best ; but it is the third best, and it is admirable.

The weather is not always good ; far from it. The sun never fails to rise, never fails to run his course, never fails to shine, always intends to fill the earth with light and beauty, but clouds gather round him and defeat him, storms beset him and turn to failure his best intention, his most glorious endeavor. There are thousands of men who mean to make their lives beautiful, who mean to make home beautiful, who mean to spread through the world sunshine and good cheer, but they are involved in bad weather. The light of their life is thrown back upon them, they are defeated in their best intention and endeavor. The great steamers, I believe, always intend to cross the ocean in the shortest time possible. That is the ideal of good business ; but these great ships do not always succeed. They are overtaken by storm and tempest. They are held back by stress

of weather, they plow forward, beaten by terrible seas and sorely pressed. Days late they come into port. But even in the wildest storm they head homeward, and they arrive at length.

This is a picture of the great majority of the good people whom I know. They mean well most of the time, but they fail in doing well. They are caught in the storm, they are overburdened with anxiety, they are blown back by the gales of passion and misfortune, and all that you can say of them is that they are headed homeward, that they mean well. Dr. Johnson says that hell is paved with good intentions; which shows that Dr. Johnson could fail in insight. Good intentions are among the best things in life. The good intention is all the difference there is between a mistake and a crime; it differentiates the mistaken person from the criminal as far as the east is from the west. There are no good intentions in hell. All good intentions are the breath of the Infinite in man; and they find their home at last in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For the best that we can sometimes say of the best men is that they intended well.

4. We come now to the final answer. What is your life? It is an indestructible capacity for worth, for usefulness, for the pursuit and service of the highest ideals. It is an indestructible

capacity for the divine life. That is the heart of our humanity. Below that no man can sink. He may be worthless, useless, unmoved by the ideal, but he can never be without the capacity for the highest.

Here we see the power that sets man apart from the orders of life below him. Just as the eye is made to see, and in normal cases does see, the ear to hear, the palate to taste, the hand to touch, as the design of our Maker lies in the adjustment of organ to function, so the capacity of the soul for a life of worth, utility, high intention, shows the plan and presence of God in the soul. This enduring capacity for the highest is what the Bible calls the image of God in man. He is fitted, and he alone is fitted, to share the Universal life. Some creatures have feet only, others have feet and wings. Man has the mental powers of the inferior orders of life, and he has that which they do not have, the capacity to rise into the life of God. The Greek Hermes had winged feet; the human soul has this swift, soaring distinction.

Here we learn the true ground of self-respect. The sense of self-respect is indispensable to manhood. Without self-respect no man is strong, no man is brave. Without it honor is impossible. There is hardly a noble quality of human character that is not rooted in self-respect. How men

struggle to maintain this precious feeling! To what devices, to what delusions, they resort to keep or to recover self-respect! They tell us that they are high-born, that they know so much, that they have been so very successful, that their friends are so distinguished. All the while they are aware that these things do not count. Your character is thin ice; it will not support your heavy pretensions. Retreat to the firm-set earth. You can respect your nature when you cannot respect your character. Stand on your human nature as God made it, stand on your capacity for goodness, stand on your capacity to utter in your life the moral life of God, and you shall look the whole world in the face.

Here, too, we learn the ground of hope for our kind. If only men of worth go to heaven, it will be a lonely and forlorn place. If only lives that are signally useful go there, it will still bė a sparsely populated and a weary land. If only they go to heaven who pursue consciously a high moral ideal, even on this ground the majority of our fellow men will be excluded from that sphere of radiant rest. This I cannot accept. As this old planet at midnight and in the darkest night of the year, when the city is asleep, when whole nations are asleep, still moves silently and resistlessly sunward, so the great world of toil, borne on by the Holy Ghost,

carries toward the eternal light all true workmen everywhere, even if they never look up, and think of God hardly once a week.

Do you think that is too broad? What are you going to do with these multitudes unconscious of the Christian ideal? Here are the millions who are doing the hard work of the world. They tumble out of the cradle into the workshops of the world; they tumble out of the workshops of the world into the grave; and their life from beginning to end is in the service of their kind. And is there no God living within them because of their work, as the lightning lives in the cloud? Where men gain the worth of which they are seldom conscious is not in church or Sunday-school, precious as these servants of the Spirit are, but in the stern process whereby they help their fellow men to live. An idle world would be a hopeless world. A toiling and suffering race has the worth of God in it, however dumb about the divine it may be. A serving and suffering race, even a race that serves and suffers under compulsion, is great with hope, because it is, although it know it not, the suffering servant of God.

I am not pleading for contentment with the lower forms of man's life. I am showing the ground of hope in the kingdom of God. Did you ever find the nest of a skylark? It builds

its nest in the field, in any tuft of grass that it may find. You look into that nest, and you discover there, at first, three or four tiny eggs, with the potentiality of a skylark in each one. Survey the human race, and what is your first discovery? The great, sweet capacity of manhood brooded by the sable wings of the world's work, with the Holy Ghost in the wings. You look into that nest a second time, and you see three or four mouths wide open. There are in the nest now only mouths. You consider again the masses of mankind, and you note hunger everywhere, greed, clamoring appetite. Humanity has become one vast, ravenous mouth. You look into the nest a third time. It is empty. The young birds are hopping on the ground, they are on the fences, they are exercising their wings in short flights. They are a utility to themselves and to the parent birds. Consider men again, and this time you find them working, thinking of others; the father is living for his wife and children, the wife and mother is living for her home, the children are working, too, and they are full of sympathy for their parents and for one another. Usefulness is changing into something fine and high the clamorous selfishness of the mere animal. You look once more at your birds, and you see them on the wing. They are rising in the morning

against the purpling east, pouring forth their song to the dawn, beautiful as the dawn itself, or, as in Shelley's living words, they are greeting the sunset: —

> "In the golden lightning
> Of the sunken sun,
> O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
> Thou dost float and run,
> Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun."

That is the bird at its best; that is man at his highest. Here is man's life, — capacity, intention, utility, worth, flight, song, joy, and God over all, under all, and in all blessed forever.

What is your life, O my brother? It is capacity for the highest. Rest not there. Make it pursuit of the flying ideal; make it a noble utility; make it worth, song, freedom, joy; make it the conscious, winged, happy, singing life in God.

XIII

THE ROMANCE AND THE REALITY

Luke ii, 8–12.

In this account of the birth of Jesus we have the romance and the reality, the poetry and the truth, the pageant of faith and the awful beauty of the Divine Child. The angel that appeared to the shepherds inspired fear, hope, obedience, and discovery. In the presence of the angel the shepherds were overcome with awe; they were lifted with a vast hope; at once they were obedient to the heavenly vision; and this obedience led them to the great discovery. In awe and hope and obedience they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. We may share the same feelings, we may enter the same experiences, inspired not by the angel, but by the Divine Child.

1. The true object of awe is not the angel and his heavenly host, but this Divine Child. Think what he has done to lead men to God! Think how he has made the world know that God cares for it! Suppose that Jesus had wielded an equal power in leading men away from God! Two possibilities lie in the soul of that wondrous

Child, the possibilities of racial salvation and racial perdition. Look into the manger, and behold there the awful power of a possible Saviour and a possible destroyer.

The solemn hope of life lies in its permanent interests. Men were made to live with one another according to justice, in the mood of kindness, and in devout communion with the Eternal life. Within the compass of justice and kindness and religious trust are very many great human interests. We have interests physical, intellectual, political, artistic. Our great interests are largely in the keeping of great men. They may lead us wisely, and again they may lead us astray. They may mould our intelligence in the forms of a false philosophy, crush our humanity by a false science, corrupt our sense of beauty by pressing upon us unworthy standards, enslave us by their political control, degrade us by their atheism and despair. Great men make the world; great men mar it. Fall under the influence of one sort of greatness, and your whole nature rises into strength; fall under the power of another kind of greatness, and your life is ruined. Here we see our debt to the noble great. A few great thinkers in Greece, in France, in Germany, in Great Britain, and one or two in America save the intellectual life of the race. A few sane scientists become the pledge of perma-

nent sanity in the interpretation of nature. A few poets, a few painters and builders, a few musicians, become sovereign over the artistic life of the world. A few great rulers lift the nations into political manhood and hope. What Moses, Pericles, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Cromwell, and Washington have done for the political well-being of the world it would be difficult to measure. And here is the tremendous thought: all who have served wisely might have served unwisely, all who have lifted human life might have dragged it down.

Suppose that Jesus had used his power in leading men away from God! Think of that mind! Imagine it to have framed a religion of despair, what compass and grandeur and wild fascination he could have given to it! To what empire over the thought and feeling of the race he could have lifted it! All the teachers of pessimism, Ecclesiastes, Lucretius, Omar, Swift, Schopenhauer, Thomson, would seem but vagrant clouds against the noonday sun, compared with the eternal night which his mind and sympathy might have made the home of mankind. Even Buddha would seem a small calamity compared with this, for Jesus possessed such creative power in the world of thought, and such genius for investing his creations with fascination, that had he been himself misled, he would have misled mankind.

We begin to see with what awe we should stand at the manger in Bethlehem. The possibility of the world's salvation or perdition is here. The great order of thought that tells us that the Eternal God is the Father of men, that his mercy surrounds every soul, that He has in each human being a purpose of infinite love, that the dark side of existence is but discipline in the interest of personal righteousness, inward wealth, and final joy, that almighty wisdom and goodness rule over all, may rise out of that Child's mind to illumine, to guide, and to console the world; or some scheme of inconceivable power and gloom may come forth from that same mind to cover the race with the horror of great darkness. At this manger we stand in awe. Here is the most fateful thing in history, the undeclared mind of the Child Jesus.

The leaders of the race were once children. Standing at the benign issue of their finished careers, how great they seem as they lie in the cradle, and how fateful! Washington and Arnold were once children, Lincoln and Davis, John and Judas. Paul was once a child, and Paul's nameless schoolmate whose life became a plague. Augustine was a child, and here is that forgotten friend of his whose power was spent in degrading his kind. Luther was once a child, and that other monk, who hated the light and served darkness.

Cromwell was once a child, and Charles I. The saints were once children, and the same is true of all the criminals and vagabonds in history.

In this mood of seriousness we look upon the children of to-day. They are not mere playthings. They are not simply for the entertainment and comfort of kindred. They are charged with terrible power. They may raise the nation into new greatness, and they may pull down and destroy the work of our hands. They may honor and advance the Kingdom of God, and they may bring on the reign of darkness. In our children we discern these two tremendous possibilities: they may become saviours of men, or destroyers.

2. The inspiration to hope is not in the angel and his heavenly host, but again it is in this Divine Child. In that young life carefully educated, piously trained, completely possessed by the spirit of God, is the beginning of a new day for mankind. There is the beginning of the mightiest human life in history. There is the true ground for hope. The angelic host may be but a vision; Jesus is real. The vision may fade or even become incredible; the reality of Jesus is an abiding and mighty reality. Look at him in the manger. There is Divine humanity, with worlds of strength, tenderness, beauty, insight, love, authority, awaiting revelation. Look at him, and see in that Divine soul the sure pro-

phecy of the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Old Simeon might well sing as he took this Child in his arms:

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel."

Old Simeon said nothing about the vision of angels. The salvation for which he waited was a human salvation. He was sure of that salvation when he held in his aged arms that glorious Child.

This Simeon story is the rendering of the devout heart of one generation; it is the rendering of the devout heart of all the generations. All the wise and devout in Judea, when Jesus was born, felt as Simeon did; all the wise and devout in all the generations have felt in this way as they stood in the Temple and saw this Child in the arms of the aged servant of God. It is a beautiful sight that we have here. A man old, infirm, awaiting the end, who has spent his strength in the service of his people, who sees the immense and infinite need of his nation, who longs to die not without some vision of the coming salvation, stands one fair morning at the Temple-door. Up from Bethlehem sleeping there on the hill-

side a few miles south of Jerusalem come Joseph and Mary, bringing with them the Infant Jesus. There is something in that Infant that speaks to the old man. He sees a goodly, a Divine Child. The power to work the salvation for which the old saint has been waiting is in the soul of that Child. The coming from God of this life is the sure pledge of the great deliverance. Simeon is done, but here is the beginning without end.

We must not think that Simeon knew or even dreamed what theology would say about Jesus. He simply saw before him an infant, an infant with the light of heaven in his face, with the presence of God in his soul. He saw a Divine soul, and knew that God had come anew into the world. Simeon felt about this Child as good people always feel in the presence of a rarely beautiful infant life. The saints always rejoice when a man is born into the world. The greatest thing in the world is the birth of a child, coming from God in the strength of unsearchable possibilities of service. The saints have learned the ways of God in bringing into human society more and more of his light and love and authority. They know that the cradles of the race are the east, where the new and divine day is breaking. They look thither and behold the increasing glow, the spreading fire, the great silent

oncoming day of the Lord. They know that souls bring to souls the sense and assurance of the soul of God, that new souls bring the new sense and the profounder assurance, that the great souls just born are glorious in prophecy for the race to which they have come.

You can imagine Israel in bondage, groaning under burdens too heavy to be borne, appealing blindly to Heaven, expecting God to rend the heavens and come down. The wild multitude would think nothing of the little boy that was born to Amram, would smile at the ark of bulrushes floating there in the river, would discover there nothing but pathos and the tragic love of a mother's heart in the desperate effort to save the child's life from the horrible decree of Pharaoh. Yet there may have been some pure prophetic soul, some one old in years and in suffering, and old in the knowledge of God's way of helping man, who beheld in the infant in the ark of bulrushes floating in the Nile the hope of a coming deliverer. In all the ages of distress, can we not believe that the wise and the pure waited for the coming of God in the coming of children? You can think of them, turning away in sorrow from the poor philosopher, the miserable priest, the still more miserable demagogue, turning away sad at heart from all the old and helpless leaders of the time, and going forth on a pilgrimage to

the cradles of their race. Look at them as they visit home after home; look at them as the lines of care and distress vanish from their faces, as the light of dead hopes begins to shine again in their old eyes, as they go away at last with the sure vision of God's fresh advent in the advent of new human souls.

The tabernacle of God is with men. Ye are the Temple of God. That is Christianity. Men come from God, and they bring God with them. Jesus is our Lord because he once for all set God's method of revealing himself in ideal, in perfect light, the ideal and perfect light of his Divine humanity. Henceforth we look for God in human lives, in the intellect of the wise man, in the heart of the good man, in the conscience of the pure, in the will of the strong. Here in the succession of good lives dating from the Divine life of Jesus is the river of God, and it is full of water. What the Nile is to Egypt the religious soul of man is to man. The great river created the country, it keeps it alive, it makes it fruitful and beautiful. On either side is desert, wild, wide, terrible. Whithersoever the river goes everything lives. The Nile is a kind of deity to that land, a thing so solemn, constant, supreme, that it might be worshiped. Such is the career of man in this world. On either hand are the immensities of space and time, to right and left

are the material orders of the cosmos, a boundless desert so far as any hint of love is concerned, an infinite waste wherein is found no sign of conscience, no single flower of regard or pity for man. Through this wild wilderness, in which live fearful things, there runs forever the great stream of our human life. Here is the river that makes our world and all worlds live. Here is the force that creates, that sustains, that forever guards the higher faith of man. Here is the power that is sovereign in this whole sphere in which we live, that brings God from beyond the stars, from behind the cosmos, from the unsearchable depth of eternity, and reveals Him as the life of our life, the love of our love, the soul of our soul. Greater than all the wonders of Egypt is the solemn, silent, sovereign river; greater than all the wonders of time and space is the succession of wise and good men. God is there, the living God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, our fathers' God.

The picturesque forms of faith may fade. Many things in the early faith of the Christian centuries may lose their power as the ages come and go. A whole world dear to us, dear to other generations, may pass utterly away; but one thing is sure. God in Christ is here forever. God in the lives of Christian men and women shall never pass. God in the successive generations of chil-

dren is the abiding God. Here in the Incarnation of God in Jesus, and in his disciples, is the perpetual, unassailable gospel, the Christianity that forever lives, forever vindicates its reality, that can never die. The heavenly host may be but a dream; Jesus we know is real, and God is with him.

3. Here is our inspiration to obedience. Look at the power of Jesus over his mother. Her best education was in loving and in training him. Think of the new interest in life which he gave to all, and the new sense of power. Over the shepherds and the wise men, over all the good people in the little town where he was born, over the two Temple saints, and later over the doctors, he wielded the same charm. He imparted to his mother, he imparted to all, fresh interest in living and a profounder sense of being and power. The education of Jesus was largely the work of his mother; the mother's education was in the vision she obtained of the soul of her son, in her ever-deepening love and in her ever-devoted service.

So it is to-day. What is the greatest of all economic motives? The hope of wealth? No, for of that there is no hope for thousands. The desire for bread? No, for many come to think so little of life that bread as the means of living loses its incentive. Happiness? No, for great as the quiet

content is that comes from honest work honestly done, we cannot forget the drudgery that much of the work of the world is, or the suffering that is inseparable from it. Companionship? No; for much as man depends upon man, and considerable as is the comfort of the companionship in work of like-minded men, yet we must not overlook the inhumanity of workman to workman. None of these motives, nor all of them together, could keep this old and sorrowful world of sowing and reaping, buying and selling, producing and transporting, alive for a year. If you would know the power behind the plows and reapers, the looms and stores of the world; if you would know the sufficient inspiration of miner and sailor, the man who lives in the heart of the earth and the man who spends his strength in the heart of storms and tempests, you must look into the homes, into the cradles of the race. Men work that they may get bread and shelter and education and comfort for the children. The power of the child over the father, over the mother, — there is the great, persistent inspiration of the world of work. Men and women will dare anything, will do anything, will endure anything, that the children whom they love may live. It is love, love of the amazing child, that is the mainspring of the world's best activity. In that love is coiled the power that keeps the old

world running, that will keep it running better and better, and running forever.

If this is true, we owe our character largely to our children. Three fourths of good character are born of honest work, and honest work is sustained by our love for our children; therefore to our children we are indebted for the best part of our life.

We may work for our own children; we may work for the children of others. So far we are free to choose. Beyond this there is no choice, if we would attain to our highest estate. Our highest nature will never awake from slumber, will never rise into power and joy, till the voice of the child rings in our ear. Then our work will have among its motives human love, and work into which human love enters becomes a school, a church, a sanctuary of the Most High.

We hear about the new education for the child. It is good to hear about it. But let us understand that it is not for the child alone. It is also for the parent, for the brother and sister and friend; it is for the entire generation of adult life. The capacity to love and serve children comes near being man's highest capacity. At all events, it is the capacity to gain character from the family life of the world, the capacity to win for one's self the supreme education, — the vision of worth, the passion of love, the title of servant.

It was no fanciful picture that Isaiah drew

when he said, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." The brutal world is still in the control of the cradles of the world. The wild forces in man's soul answer to the gentle voices of the children. The fierce passions of men, passions for pleasure, idleness, show, vanity, sensuality, and numberless shameless things are subdued into working energies, converted into capacities for a fellowship of service and reasonable living, by the divine charm of childhood. In the vision and love and service of childhood the wild beasts within us are tamed; we become men. We have given to the children our life; we have received it back with God in it.

4. Finally, the Divine Child is our great incentive to discovery. The nature of Jesus is the inexplorable and rewarding mystery. Jesus is continually saying that he is the path to God. He is the way, no less than the truth and the life. He is this in a unique manner, and at the same time he is this in a representative manner. One of the greatest achievements of Jesus is the sense which he created in men of the unfathomable meaning of human nature. His vision of men as sons of God was a vision of beings with the divinest endowment, and capable of put-

ting forth the very greatest powers. Jesus saw in men indestructible affinities to the Eternal, indissoluble bonds of brotherhood, plans of God lying deep in the soul for an existence, personal and social, of the greatest range and worth, and endless capacities for all noble growth, all exalted achievement, all serious fellowship, all high delight. Jesus was himself the supreme wonder of the world; he was this as the Divine Man. And the greatest thing on the earth for Jesus was not nature, but humanity, not things, but souls, not systems of opinion or religion, but man. To man Jesus devoted his whole strength. For Jesus man was the sovereign fact in creation, the key to the character of God. And one thing he has done of immeasurable moment. He has stimulated among all peoples the sense of humanity, inspired man to the study of man, set the human soul in the centre of all high interests, and built the intellectual world round this centre. Jesus surveyed our world, considered the fruitfulness of its various parts in relation to the Infinite, looked into many of the barren excavations, the vain searchings of men, held within the compass of his vision the whole field of possibility, put his hand upon the human soul, personal and social, and said, "Mine here. Here is the inexhaustible vein. The wealth of the world, the riches of the universe, are to be approached and gained

from this point. God comes to men in me, God comes to men in man."

Our generation is earnest over this teaching of Jesus. We hold the child in higher value. We believe that wonders await us in the study of the soul of the child. We believe that there are depths and heights of wisdom in the unconscious spirit of a normal child that bring God anew into the world; we look to this psychic wonder and behold a mystery of personality only barely conscious of itself, yet moving forces and showing implications of itself over immeasurable fields, developing surprises, revealing capacities, that amaze the student, and that call upon him for profounder search and devotion. Here in the children are our future prophets, teachers, scholars, statesmen, citizens, and masters of trade, lovers, husbands, wives, makers and moulders of the nation. As they are, it will be. As they may be, it may become. The possibilities of the child are the possibilities of the nation, the possibilities of the world. Every spring the farmer goes forth upon a new venture; every new seedtime is the promise of a yet better harvest. In every new generation of children there is a chance for a new and better nation. In every new generation of children there may be the assurance of a nobler country. Here is the seed-time of citizenship; here is the assurance of a mightier harvest. Men

of economic habits are grieved as they see in Niagara so much power running to waste. Their grief is a sordid grief. The æsthetic wonder more than compensates for the economic loss. Let grief be turned in wise directions. Let us grieve that the fresh accession of Divine power sent to society in each new generation of children is allowed so largely to run to waste, that only a fraction of the innate nobility of children is ever saved to the world, that the vast volume of its love, honor, fellow-feeling, moral insight, and might has never yet been put to the service of man. That is the wild cataract whose thunder may well awaken grief and despair; that is the rolling and tremendous flood whose perpetual waste may well be the supreme sorrow of mankind.

We come back to this conclusion. The people who revere childhood, who enter into the vision of its hidden wealth of capacity and possibility, who secure that wealth by wise training, who thus improve their own stock from generation to generation, providing with the lapse of the centuries nobler lovers, better husbands, and deeper-hearted mothers, will surely aid in the achievement of two things. They will provide the better race to command the future, they will build the nation upon the better-understood and better-served childhood: they aid in securing an ascending national life.

This is one of the two things, and the other is the greater faith. The best man brings us nearest to God. The sovereign man carries the world into the very presence of God. This is the work of Jesus. He was able to take the world with him into the consciousness of God. And when he left the world, he left his disciples in it to continue his work. He works for the coming of the better child, the ideal child, the race lifted into truth and goodness. He waits for a social whole so wise, so clean, so devout, so sure of God itself, that it will like a mighty tide take up souls everywhere and carry them to God.

We do not look to the angels for new light. We look to the cradles of the land. We watch by the young life of the race for the consolation of the race. In the freshness of its endowment, in the conservation of its grace through the wiser training, in the steady unfolding of its divine humanity, in the rhythm and song of its devout and exalted life, we hear the notes of a new Gloria in Excelsis.

XIV

WISE MEN AND THEIR IDEALS

"For we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him."
Matthew ii, 2.

THERE are many questions concerning this star that we cannot answer. Was it a veritable outward illumination, or only an inner guiding light? Did it belong to those great bodies that travel and shine in space, or to those ideal splendors that give distinction to all wise and serious human life? Is this story about the star the history of some miraculous heavenly appearance, or is it poetry, a beautiful parable of something great in certain human souls? These are questions about which we may have opinions, but which we cannot answer. We were not there to share the vision, and therefore we cannot tell what it was that the wise men saw.

Some things, however, are clear. The star was the star of wise men. It was seen in the East, that is, it appeared in the firmament under which these men lived, it moved in their environment, it looked down upon them in their places of toil and suffering. It was a guiding star; it connected the East with a better West, it led them on from one form of wisdom to a higher, it brought

them at length to the birthplace of the Highest. And in all these respects this star is of permanent moment for mankind; it is of clear and shining significance for us to-day.

Wise men cannot live without beholding great, moving, guiding lights. The anthem oftenest upon the lips of the wise is, "To him that made great lights; for his mercy endureth forever." The wise man is always a star-beholder, a star-follower. He lives by the splendor of ideals. These fill his inner sky with their bright order and their solemn beauty. They appear to each wise man in the region where he dwells. They look down upon him in his toil, and love, and suffering, and prayer. They transfigure the night of his animalism and raise within his spirit new dreams of the dignity of his nature. They expand his narrow world; they give him the sense of the Infinite and Eternal. They connect his partial and fleeting existence with something great and enduring; they call him onward to the fulfillment of his deepest longings; they bring him step by step to the supreme manifestation of God. When we are wise, we see and follow shining ideals; when we see and follow shining ideals, we come at last, after long journeys, it may be, and much weariness, to the vision of Christ. For Christ is the great answer to the ideal longings of man; he is, in the profoundest sense, the desire of all nations.

1. There is the ideal thought of the world. How wise men have striven for the deepest and the most satisfying insight into this mysterious existence, into this mysterious universe! Let the search be properly conditioned, let it be wise, let it be for a thought that best accounts for what is of most concern in man's world. Such a man was Augustine, who went the round of all the teachers of the day, who longed for a wise and true thought about this strange life of ours, and who, when he came to the New Testament, found himself at home. Take all the philosophers of the spirit in our Christian era who have known anything about Christianity. They started far enough away, many of them, from Christ's interpretation of existence; they toiled, suffered, grew; they came, the permanent names among them, to see in the great thoughts of Jesus the profoundest insight into life. It is impressive in the highest degree to find Fichte teaching the way toward the blessed life in the terms of Christian thought, and to watch John Stuart Mill in his old age standing in admiration before the sublime genius of Jesus Christ. The thought that presents the Eternal as our Father in Heaven, that makes of our human race one family, that looks upon the universe as our Father's house, that regards the earthly sojourn of man as life in one room of that house, and man's career in the

unseen as life in another room of the same dwelling, is for the spiritual intellect the ideal of all wise thought.

We do not know that it is true. It may seem too good to be true. We are unable to prove that it is true. But hither we come in our quest for the best, here we rest in our wanderings, here by the sublime teaching of Jesus we wait. It is so wise and so worthy. It meets the demands of a reasonable mind, and it holds for the intelligence a reasonable universe. We can see our fathers and the great company whom they represent standing here. They were led hither by their parents and teachers and the custom of their times. They were led by something greater. They were led by the desire for an adequately wise thought, and they were led through the stern discipline of life. Famous men leave to posterity many portraits. The generations examine these one by one, and finally gather about the best. This they hold is the most speaking likeness of the famous spirit now in the unseen. So men examine and select among the likenesses of Luther, Cromwell, Milton, and Lincoln. They examine, select, and wait upon the best. So we deal with man's thoughts about the universe. They are portraits made by an immemorial succession of artists differing greatly in insight and power. Wise men examine these portraits

because of their profound desire to know the character of the world in which they live. They examine, select, and finally gather in fixed admiration and faith about the best. The thought of Jesus is the great portrayal of the character of the universe. This, we believe, is the true likeness of the Eternal. Hither we have been led by our desire for the wisest human thought of existence. Here by this sublime image of existence we will wait till the day break and the shadows flee away.

2. There is the ideal beauty in the world. It sometimes seems to us strange that the incomparable painting genius of early modern Europe should have been so engrossed with sacred subjects. We explain it by saying that the world was then under the domination of Catholic Christianity, and that artists sought their subjects in what lay close to the popular heart. That is one explanation, and there is perhaps some truth in it.

There is, however, a deeper explanation. The lover of beauty, if wise, must go on to the highest. Take a soul like Raphael or Michelangelo. Consider the passion for beauty in that spirit. Where can it rest but in the vision of the beauty of the Lord our God? There is no beauty in Greece that can satisfy the vision that appears in the Sistine Madonna. There is no beauty

anywhere save in the life of Christ that can meet the soul of Michelangelo. When Da Vinci selects for his greatest picture the Last Supper, he is wise. He can do nothing else.

Beauty has its home in character. The most beautiful thing in Greek literature is Antigone. A lofty, loyal, dauntless human soul conducts to the true sphere of beauty. You cannot think of Antigone, beautiful and loving beauty, as anything else than a pilgrim to the cradle of Christ, a pilgrim finally to the cross of Christ. In tragedy her character shines out in beauty; in tragedy Christ's heavenly grace appears. He is, therefore, no lover of beauty who never sees it as it burns in the highest human character. Those who worship only sensuous beauty dwell in the land of shadows; they are like men who see the stars reflected in a pond, and who dive for them there. They dive after reflections, they pursue shadows, they worship images. Wise lovers of beauty look up. There in the inaccessible heights the real eternal stars shine. There is the poetry of heaven. And in human character, in brave, benign, self-sacrificing service, in souls devoted to the highest, is the true beauty of the world. Whoever sees that will travel onward till he comes to the character that is the grace and the truth of human history.

If you have ever seen a beautiful soul in man,

in woman, or in child; if you have ever stood before the apocalypse of a true mother's heart, or a noble father's spirit, if you have ever in this world actually beheld a beautiful human character, you know that there is nothing in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth to match that loveliness. Thenceforth, grateful for every vision of beauty, you seek for the beauty of a great soul, and seeking for the beauty of a great soul you find yourself at last by the side of the supreme soul of Christ.

3. Others are moved by pity. In the religion of Buddha pity is fundamental. The image of Buddha is always an expression of painless compassion. And this is the secret of his power over the uncounted millions of suffering men and women in the hopeless East. He cannot remove, he cannot mitigate their sufferings, he cannot change the law of misery under which all existence moves, but he can behold it in loving, subdued, gracious compassion. That enfolding compassion of the Buddha, although it can change nothing, is nevertheless an inexpressible comfort to the hopeless sufferer from the misery of being.

Perhaps this is the point of contact between what is highest in the East and in the West. Perhaps the pity of Jesus has not been adequately presented by our preachers in foreign

lands. The sufferings of these peoples are very great, and if it could be shown that the compassion of Jesus is deeper far than that of Buddha, diviner far, efficacious also over mind and body, the channel of a redeeming grace, the pathway and agent of an endless hope, perhaps these vast inert populations would more willingly open their hearts to the power of the Christian gospel. First there comes to the cold earth, locked under the stern hand of winter, the warm spring rain; the heavens pour this living tide into the ground until it is filled with it, softened, made aware of a new visitation. Then comes the sunshine, and then new life and hope everywhere. So it is with these suffering continents. Present first of all the compassionate Christ. Flood the being of these peoples with the heavenly sympathy of the Lord. Let it rain down upon them until they know that a divine power has entered into their existence. Then throw upon them the glowing illumination of Christian truth. Perhaps in this way the wilderness and the solitary place might rejoice, and the desert blossom as the rose. Perhaps in this way compassion might be the channel of a hope that would stir to effort these stagnant races and create in them a desire to live forever, that forever they might climb into the blessedness and the strength of good men.

Pity in the form of sympathy is indeed the

only path to a multitude of hearts among ourselves. Thousands are so concerned and absorbed with their sufferings that they see nothing and hear nothing that does not first of all ring into their thoughts the notes of sympathy. They live as it were within the sound of the church bell, but the bell is unheard, or heard only as a disturber of the peace, till it becomes a chime of bells and plays some soft melody laden with the memories of other years, or some refrain of sorrow that pours upon the air the burden in their own sad souls. The voice that arrests attention, that gains a hearing, that finally opens the sealed receptivities of the soul, is, in a multitude of cases, the voice of compassion. So Jesus moved among men. His nature enfolded the existence of children and mothers, of publicans and sinners, of rich and poor, of suffering men and women everywhere, and they felt that in his presence they were understood and their burden of sorrow justly measured and weighed. What Jesus was in this aspect of his character we are too gross to dream. We try to figure that mighty, self-oblivious soul, with its divine outward look, everywhere scanning the faces of the men and women whom he met, reading the great secrets of their hearts, and pouring in unbidden the tides of a benign sympathy, enfolding all in the heavenly comfort of a sublime

compassion; but in our best endeavor we fail of any adequate image of what must have been the heavenly grace of his approach to men.

If we look into the Gospels, we see at once how very few came to Jesus because of a hunger for goodness, and how many because of the cry of the heart for sympathy. The Syrophœnician mother and the centurion came, as others did, for their children. Something in their human existence was inexpressibly precious; something had gone wrong at the heart of this joyous possession. Something there was in Jesus that drew such people toward him. He might or he might not be able to help them; of one thing they were sure, they would be encircled in his sympathy. Perhaps, in a way, this was the attractive power of Jesus over his disciples. We are not sure that any one of the twelve Apostles was drawn to Jesus by the great and baffled passion for righteousness. Paul is the only Apostle, so far as we know, whose first interest in Jesus was an exalted moral interest. The other men who became the disciples and apostles of Jesus came to him because of his illuminating and comforting sympathy. They found in him other things, and they developed for him other interests. But this was the aboriginal interest. Rabbi, where dwellest thou? Come and see. The lesser and feebler natures came that they

might stand in the comfort and hope of the greater. Nicodemus was of this order. He was torn with perplexity and unrest. He could not understand himself. He was not moved by any decided desire for personal goodness. He came that he might be understood, he came for the illumination and peace of a great compassion. And so it was all through the ministry of Jesus. He had an inexhaustible fund of noble sympathy. Men and women sought it in their distress, as one might seek perpetual summer.

Christ's mood of compassion toward man is still mighty. In this world there are so many hard attitudes toward life. There is brutal indifference. How many among rich and poor alike, how many among resourceful natures of all classes, are brutally indifferent toward the fate of their fellow men! Like the priest and the Levite, they pass by on the other side. Suffering is a thing to be shunned and forgotten. There is the cynical attitude. Here there is interest, but it is that of the mocker under the cross. Ha, thou that destroyest the temple and in three days buildest it again! There is the mood of blind criticism. It is not brutal, it is not cynical, it is simply blind. He saved others, himself he could not save. There is the attitude of moral justice. Its maxim is: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. It is just, but oh, how severe!

Men seldom start on equal terms with the moral order. There is nearly always a handicap somewhere. And the justice that notes all this rises into compassion. This higher justice was the habitual mood of Jesus. He saw the tragedy in which all human life is caught. The ideal asks for perfection; the soul is made for perfection, but the soul is in alliance with a body of death. This confusion of higher and lower in man, of the will to follow the best and the impulse of the animal, the strength and the weakness that make up this great and pathetic humanity of ours, Jesus completely understood. He saw it all, and the sea of troubles that rose through it, and he was filled with compassion. The help that man needs is the help of the compassionate teacher who can wait and work for the far distant end.

This is the sublime compassion of Jesus, and all who love it follow that love till it brings them to him. What is there in any other way of regarding the world at all comparable to this? Is not this the way to think of our fellow men? Do we not occasionally pray that into this high and pure spirit we may be lifted? And when we are, for a moment, thus minded, is there any being in all history who appeals to us, and who draws us toward him, as Christ does? Is he not like music? I recall the effect of a German band upon the life in one of our great thoroughfares.

It struck up the simple refrain, "There's a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar." Every person, every wagon, every car, every moving object stood still, all windows were opened, and silent, eager faces crowded them; the business of the street for a few great moments was absolutely suspended. There was something in that music that arrested, that found, that comforted every man. One might have spoken to those souls, or sung to them, or gotten up a show for them, but the multitude would have paid little heed to it. It was that strain of music that hushed all hearts into peace. Something like this is the effect upon the world of the compassion of Jesus. It is so unearthly, and yet it is what the world needs. It is so unlike the strife and cruelty among men, and yet it finds in man the greater man that cries out for it. It opens the depths in the human soul, and calls out hidden capacities and longings. It wields upon men the power of great music. Here is something which, for a brief space at least, men cannot resist. Here is a spirit that compels the world to stand still, and that wins to itself every seeker after a higher justice in the world.

4. Some are led to the Master by the vision of that which I think is highest in his character, — his magnanimity. When the world is wiser,

when it learns to value things in wisdom, it will be profoundly affected by the magnanimity of Jesus. At present this aspect of his character is too high; it is like the far-soaring summit of some great mountain. It is seldom seen. It is lost in cloud and storm. Our human atmosphere breeds these clouds and tempests, and therefore what is loftiest is seldomest beheld. A better day will surely come, a serener air, when the highest in Jesus can stand over men in all the power of its sublime beauty. Offer to feed the poor, and your tables will be crowded; offer to entertain the rich, and your feast of wit will gather a multitude; offer to teach men the way of wisdom, and the number will diminish; offer to men a great opportunity for goodness, and fewer still will come; offer the highest, the magnanimity of Christ, and men will say, with Peter, "I understand not what thou sayest." This is the pathos of the world. The highest is not so dear to man as the lowest; the highest is not so sweet to good men as the lower. Many will read a worthless romance and never open Shakespeare or Milton. Many will read the Sunday newspaper and never look at the great words of psalmist, prophet, and apostle. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. But to those few, how exhilarating, how divine, is that narrow way!

The magnanimity of Christ is higher than his pity. The power to deal justly with men is great, the power to pity men who deal unjustly is greater; the power to regard them with no bitterness when one is the victim of their injustice is the greatest. Jesus always dealt justly by men. His fairness is one great power in his character. He looked upon men and women in their wickedness with profound compassion. He was able, when he received no justice, when he received instead injustice and outrage, humiliation and contempt of the last and worst degree, to rise above it all, to regard the world without bitterness, to carry it in its blindness to God in his prayer. In the tragedy of life we all stand. Some men deserve much good, and they get more than they deserve. This they know, and this is their cross. Some men deserve much good, and get less than they deserve, and this is their bitterness. Some men when they are good are treated as if they were bad. They belong among the honorable servants of mankind; they are placed among the malign forces. One there was who deserved the best and who received the worst, who was the supreme servant of the race, and who was crucified between two thieves. Here in this tragic world we all live. Somewhere our bitterness lies. Are we less deserving than the world thinks? Are we more guilty than the

world knows? Are we worthier than it believes? Are we wrongly placed? How under these conditions do we behave? Here is the sovereign test of man, here is the sovereign test of man's world. Oh, the tragedy in which we all are involved! Oh, the pain to good men of overestimation, of underestimation, of mistaken estimation, of infamous estimation! In this tragedy Jesus lived his life. He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He is with us in the great waters, and they smite him as they do us. He is with us in the fiery furnace, and it consumes him as it consumes us. But in this tragedy we behold in him what we long to see in ourselves, and cannot see because it is not there. We behold in him the sense of justice outraged by the treatment which he received, and yet without bitterness, without losing his high regard for men, without uttering one unseemly word, without giving expression to one thought or feeling lower than the highest. We see in Jesus one who, when he has done the best that man can do for his brother, and receives as wages the worst, is able to look down upon those that put him to death and say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" This is the highest in Jesus; when we love magnanimity, as one day men will, that love will guide to the Lord.

5. More general than the guiding ideals men-

tioned are the ideals of life's fulfillment and life's worth. Men who are conscious of a soul, of a great and happy range of powers, who are aware that in the humanity that they bear they have the secret of a wonderful existence, who come to look upon themselves as they regard some rare musical instrument, usually ponder the paths of their feet. They seek knowledge, insight, skill; they seek teachers, exemplars, wise and inspiring leaders. The desire for life's fulfillment gives them a wide and vigilant outlook. They look for help as the eagle does for prey. They fly high, circle wide, and with keen vision see from afar. When any light traveling the way of Christ meets their sight, they follow it. They seek the rest of the heart in the highest, and every path and every guide bring them on their way to the Lord. The Ethiopian whom Philip met in the desert south of Jerusalem is an example of the whole class. He was a seeker after life's fulfillment. He found in Philip a shining guide, and he followed this guide to the heart of Christ.

The ideal of life's worth is of still more general power. Where there is love there is the sense of the worth of existence. It is impossible for human beings to be members of happy homes, without the consciousness of life's worth. Fathers and mothers would like to believe that the chil-

dren who are so fair and dear to them are fair and dear to the Eternal. Every fortunate son and daughter would like to believe that God estimates even more highly than they do the noble father, the beloved mother, who has passed out of this world. Find anywhere a lover, and you find one who would gladly believe that his beloved is the beloved of God. And when the heart is great, when it is burdened with more and more of the precious things of love, it instinctively looks about it for support. It cannot bear the burden of its own love, unless God is with it. Who can bring it to God? Who can give it the best insight into the character of the Infinite? Whoever can in any measure meet that demand becomes to that soul a guiding star, and that guiding star leads naturally to the Lord, who gives the vision of the God without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, who numbers even the hairs of our head, to whom men are joined in the deathless bond of Fatherhood and childhood. To that protection for the loving heart men of love come at last.

Here we see plainly why some men move toward Christ with the profoundest interest, and why others turn away from him. Men turn away from him because they desire none of the things that he has to give. They are not wise men. They do not desire wisdom. Some one asked Dr.

Mayhew why it was that the Song of Solomon was in the Bible and that the Wisdom of Solomon was left out. His answer was that as a general thing people are fonder of songs than they are of wisdom. Men without wisdom behold no shining ideals, and without ideals men do not search for the Highest. The hardest thing that the best physician has to do is to create an appetite where there is none. Feats in surgery, in wise prescription for the elimination of the poison of disease, are as nothing compared with the task of creating appetite in a desireless and impotent organism. Yet without some degree of eager receptivity, all the food in the world is worthless. The hardest task of the man of God to-day is to create the taste for divine things, to awaken an interest in them, and a longing for them. Teaching those who desire to know, comforting those whose hearts are open to comfort, supplying with thought and inspiration these noble men and women under the stress of existence, is easy, is indeed nothing, to the task of getting men without interest in the things of the spirit to care for them. It is like raising the dead. We do not expect the dead to wait upon the Lord in these earthly courts; and we can hardly expect those whose inward fire has sunk to a mere smoking cinder to flame with passion for things divine. The widest and most tragic

contrast among men is not between the rich and the poor, the joyous and the sorrowful, those in outward comfort and those in outward misery, but between the soul that sings, "My heart and my flesh cry out after the living God," and the soul that sighs, "My heart and my flesh are as dust and ashes within me when I think of God." Son of man, can these dry bones live? O Lord, thou knowest! What can make them live but the breath of the Eternal? What but the breath of the Holy Spirit can rekindle the dying flame of high desire?

That serious and aspiring men should move into an ever deeper appreciation of Jesus, is of all things the most natural. The force of gravity pulls irresistibly the smaller body to the greater, and where souls are kindred, the weaker moves toward the stronger by a similar inevitableness. If a man is deeply concerned about the quality of his existence, if moral excellence fascinates him, if the greater ideals of human goodness greet him from afar, if his soul discovers in merely animal pleasure a circle of death, if the hunger and thirst of his being rise into a hunger and thirst after righteousness, and if he is eager for illuminations and inspirations in his quest for moral peace, he is almost sure to end his quest in the school of Christ. So it is with the seeker after wisdom in all her forms. Such a soul is like the iron that

cannot resist the magnet. In the sphere of Christ the devout lover of wisdom is irresistibly drawn to Christ. His aim is one with that of Christ, his moral being is one with that of Christ, and he is but going to his own better self when he is going to Christ. He is seeking the highest manhood, and how can he help moving toward Christ? Can one seek light, and not desire the full day? Can one love the highest human goodness and not love Christ? You see in your child the sense of beauty. You watch your child under the charm of the beautiful things in your home, and in the nature that lies round your home. You take your child to some of the great sights of the world. You travel through the natural wonders of our own land, you stand before some masterpiece in painting, you hear great music in the land of the great composers. You know in advance what the effect will be upon your child. The love of beauty is there, and when beauty comes in surpassing form, the love rises to greet it. So it is in the sphere of the spirit. When we see men who are lovers of goodness, we are sure that when they behold him they will become lovers of Christ. The mood is there which impels towards the highest, and when the Highest appears they cleave to him as the goal of desire. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." He saw the heavenly ideal, and he looked

forward to the day when in some great human soul it would find complete embodiment. What is the Messianic hope of Israel but the star that wise men beheld in the east? As all the stars travel toward the zenith, so all goodness leads up toward the supreme Christ.

I must remind you again of the profound parable in the words of the text. Wise men saw the star; only the wise see these shining and moving ideals that are the assurance of all progress and all peace. Wise men saw the star in the east, in the place where they lived. In the region where they live and labor and suffer it is still true that wise men see everlasting lights. They do not need to travel far to see them; in the heart of life's toil and weariness they need only to look up and behold them overhead in serene, prophetic brightness. A mother in sorrow for her child, the sorrow that is the great obverse of her love, a father longing for a deeper and tenderer heart, young men and women in the world's work, close to the world's uncleanness, praying for a strong and an uncontaminated humanity, the anxious by the bed of pain, the bereaved by the open grave, and the lonely heart under the awful burden of its solitude, have but to pause, look up, and behold the heavenly ideal that guides the feet of the faithful to the light that never was on sea or land, and into the peace that

passeth all understanding. In the east, where you are, as you are, and in the heart of your toil and pain, look up, and behold that serene and beckoning star. It is the great tie between us and the Highest. Jesus is not foreign to us. He is each soul at its best, each soul as God meant it should be. He is our ideal realized, and when we follow that ideal, we come at length to him. Our ideals are the moving lights that connect our poor, isolated souls with the life in Christ, with the life in God. We live in the east, but our ideals travel until they stand over the cradle, over the manhood of Christ; and when we follow them, we move away from our isolation into the greatness of the life in God. We have come again to this great Christmas season. Oh, that we might be wise! Oh, that we might see in the east some heavenly and moving illumination! Oh, that we might follow it across all wild and sorrowful places, through all lonely valleys, over all weary plains and looming mountains, till life is blessed in the vision of God in Christ!

XV

THE FINAL THEODICY

"And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 *Cor.* xii, 9.

WHEN we first begin to consider it, the order of this world is not at all to our minds. If we ever come to think well of it, if we ever come to like it, without exception it is through a great reconciliation. We pass from disapproval to quiet acceptance through a profounder insight, a nobler wisdom, a loftier experience, a vaster and surer hope. At the first, the order of this world is for all honest and serious persons a supreme disappointment.

Without audacity, without hypocrisy, in all sad sincerity, we declare that if we had made this world, we should have made it differently. If we had made this world, we should have put no winter in our sky, no storms on our seas, no volcanoes in our islands and continents, no reign of death over the empire of life. If we had made the human race, we should have put into it no physical defect, no mental eccentricity, no bias of will toward evil. If we had made this world, we

should not have wrapped it in impenetrable and appalling mystery.

Our disappointment here is deep and sad. It is more. It takes the form of revolt. We have seen a child — beautiful and gifted — on some radiant morning looking out upon the world in perfect admiration and joy. We have seen the change pass over the countenance of that child as it comes to realize, for the first time, the cruelty, the suffering, and the death that reign in that fair world; still more, as it comes to know man's inhumanity to man, the child's joy is turned to grief, its admiration is changed to horror. For the moment, sympathy with nature and mankind is changed into fierce hatred and revolt.

At the beginning we are equally disappointed with our Master Jesus Christ. His programme is not our programme for ourselves. He does not at first fulfill our expectations. He does not keep his promises as we understand them. He does not remove our diseases nor heal our sicknesses. Only fanatics believe that; and for men who value sure thinking, fanaticism is too great a price to pay for peace. He does not remove our weaknesses all at once. He does not lift the fixed boundaries of existence, or change the order in which we live. He does not transport us to the Paradise in which there is no forbidden tree, in which there is no serpent, no possibility of fatal

deceit, and no fall from honor. This is not our Master's method with us. He leaves us where he found us, in the world of toil, misunderstanding, contradiction, sorrow, and death. He leaves us here, and he works upon us slowly. Slowly along the avenues of thought, along the paths of feeling, by the power of his spirit upon our spirit, slowly he works upon us, almost imperceptibly. Sickness is still sickness, temptation is still temptation, the severity of the world is the same relentless thing, loss is still loss, the passing of youth is the immemorial fact, unchanged, the coming of age with its infirmity, with its incapacity, and, most melancholy of all, with its all too frequent breakdown and wreck, is the old, unaltered, hateful, mocking face of fate. What advantage hath the wise over the fool? What gain is there in Christian discipleship? What does Christ do for those who love him? It is clear that he does not change their world or their fate; nor does he change them at a stroke.

Here come in the great endeavors of high minds to justify the ways of God to man. One of the noblest of all Plato's discussions is that in which he meets the original bewilderment of the young mind as it surveys the world. Great and beautiful is his showing of the interior strength and peace of the righteous soul. He had laid to heart the great utterance of his dying Master:

No evil can happen to a good man, whether he be alive or dead. Wide and daring is the reach of thought of Leibnitz in the same great service. Milton's motive in "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" has its elevation here, and at the same time its closeness to human need. We must recall his solemn invocation: —

"And chiefly thou, O spirit that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st, . . . what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the way of God to men."

Milton is thinking not primarily of the fall of Adam, but of the fall of Cromwell's Commonwealth, the wreck therein of English freedom, and the great contradiction of God that rises out of the depths of this disaster. Milton was driven back upon the universal disappointment of man in God's world by his own bitter disappointment as a freeman. In this way we all live. The personal sorrow sends us to raise questions in the heart of the human and ageless sorrow. We must seek peace to-day with this stern order through finding light. We go with Paul in his quest; we join him in his discovery; we seek to rest in the great vindication, the great theodicy in which he rested.

There comes a time when noble and candid men are willing to confess that perhaps God knew better than they how to make the world. There comes a time when serious disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to admit that perhaps their Master knows his work better than they. Paul had come to this mood. He had been tormented with some strange experience. There was a thorn in his flesh; it was cutting and tearing there every moment. It was a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. That this thorn might be removed, Paul threw his whole soul into prayer. It was an intense, a passionate, and persistent cry to God for relief from terrible pain. It was a cry for a changed environment. It represents the great burden of the world's prayer in all ages. Ninety-nine out of every hundred prayers that have been offered since the morning of time have had reference to environment. We pray to be delivered from pinching poverty, from uncongenial tasks, from the presence of people who are unfriendly and unsympathetic. We pray that failure may be averted, that sickness may not come near our beloved, that the shadow of death may be turned back. We pray for a heavenly environment, for a lot in life accordant with our dreams of good, for a Paradise without a forbidden tree and without a serpent. These are the burden of the world's

prayers ; and these are the prayers to which the great denial comes. Tennyson puts the case with truth and pathos: —

> "O mother, praying God will save
> Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
> His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
> Drops in his vast and wandering grave."

To our first reflections, there is something appalling in the absolute negative which God returns to most of the prayers that are offered to Him by mortal men.

Paul's prayer was not granted, but something better came than that for which he prayed, — enduring strength, victorious manhood, the joy of the Lord, the sense of a triumphant God working in the very heart of his human weaknesses and sufferings. Thus it was that the world as God made it became for Paul the best of all possible worlds. Here Paul came upon the great vindication of God's ways to men, the final theodicy. Upon this discovery several remarks must be made.

1. This world, as it stands, as God made it, is man's supreme opportunity. It is his opportunity for what? For heroism, for the highest type of manhood. One thing is clear, absolutely clear, that this world was not made for cowards. For them and for all their kin it is the worst possible world. It calls for endurance, self-denial, devotion, magnanimity, brave service with no stipula-

tion about wages. It runs counter, in its great tragic currents, to the entire egoism of man. From the egoistic position it appears a shocking world.

On the other hand, this world as it stands is the best possible world for all who would be dauntless, chivalrous, of a temper fine and high. The bird that flies in the storm and prevails, the ship that sails in the tempest and outlives it, the hard-pressed toiler who can yet make both ends meet, the business man consumed by anxiety who is yet able to control his business and make it a success, the person who is up to the neck in temptation who still keeps his head above the flood, the individual who has laid in the hungry earth his beloved and whose great cry is "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," is surely a conqueror and possessed of a conqueror's joy.

In your Paradise for cowards you find no patriarch walking with God, no great idealist going out "not knowing whither he went," trusting in the Infinite, none enduring as seeing Him who is invisible. In your Paradise for cowards there is no Hebrew psalm, no epic of Job, no oracle of prophet, no sweet Bethlehem, no Gethsemane, no Calvary, no Mount of Ascension. In the hateful world where everything makes for luxury, idleness, effeminacy, you have no heroes, no mar-

tyrs, no reformers. In such a world there can be no such figure as the Greek Antigone, pure, victorious in the arms of death, a vision of strength and glory forever. If we had made this world, we should have made tragedy impossible; and in so doing we should have made the human race poor indeed. For the tragedy of the world is the garden of the Lord. In that awful movement of cross-currents between ideals and experiences, dear hopes and blank negations, to which we give the name of tragedy, the supreme achievements and possessions of man are found, — strength, love, dauntless courage, inward victory, and the sense that below the waves and billows that have gone over us is the tide that will carry us, alive or dead, to our own shore. The world as it is has brought to men and women the vision of home. The world as it is has somehow permitted love and its sacrament. The world as it is has wrung from the human heart the great psalms. It has brought from the human mind its great light. It has somehow given us great character. The world as it is has given us Jesus Christ and all his worthful followers.

2. This world as it is, is God's opportunity. When Paul began life, he had many things in him that he needed taken out of him. He was a proud man. His joy in existence consisted largely in his sense of superiority to other men. That

is a tremendous weakness. It means isolation from much of the best life of the race ; it means, therefore, sore limitation, inevitable impoverishment, incapacity for certain great experiences, and along all true lines diminished capacity for growth. Pride is, at the same time, a stain upon the best character, like an ink spot on a piece of tapestry, like a poison working in a strong and otherwise sound body, like a hidden falsehood corrupting the integrity of an honest intellect. This was one of Paul's weaknesses; it shut him in from the great life of humanity, it gave him a mean delight.

In this world as it is God took Paul, and so wrought upon him that his chief joy was found in the common possession of Christian men, — in his intelligence directed upon God with devout and grateful homage, in his heart open to the empire of Christ and invoking his presence, in his life given in service to the kingdom of God. Paul came to have his chief joy in the God who is the Father of all, in the Christ who is the Saviour of all, in the kingdom that ruleth over all.

Was not that a great thing to do for Paul? Was the world not a good world in which so great a thing was done? Was not the proud man in his proud isolation God's opportunity? Did not the stern order of things serve God as a field for the accomplishment of his great work?

He found the proud man upon his poor perch, not fit for an owl, and he brought him down to the sense of equality with the humblest of his kind. For, after all, the best gift is humanity, and every human being shares in that. You recall Browning's great words in "Paracelsus." The proud man has come at last to his strength: —

> "I want to be forgotten even by God.
> But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay me,
> When I shall die, within some narrow grave,
> Not by itself — for that would be too proud —
> But where such graves are thickest; let it look
> Nowise distinguished from the hillocks round,
> So that the peasant at his brother's bed
> May tread upon my own and know it not;
> And we shall all be equal at the last."

Another weakness of Paul, akin to that described, was his abnormal sense of tribal and sectarian distinction. Was he not a Pharisee of the Pharisees? Was he not of the tribe of Benjamin? Was he not a Hebrew of the Hebrews? And did any man ever wrap his garments about him in the sense of exclusive privilege with more joy than he? In this mood, living in this world, God found Paul. Hear him speak when he had been delivered from this weakness. "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom

I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ: . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." This man has entered the highest life of his kind. He has surrendered exclusiveness for community in the sorrow, service, and hope of a redeemed race. He has abandoned aristocracy under law for democracy under the spirit of God. In this world God has turned this Jewish aristocrat into the supreme democrat of his age; so that now he goes everywhere, to Jews, Greeks, Romans, barbarians, bond, and free, as the debtor of all, struggling through monumental services to discharge this debt to the race through fellowship with whom God has given him a supreme life. Who would not live in this world for this end? Who would not suffer that he might become, like Paul, the broad-breasted, high-souled, dauntless servant of man? And who that has become a free communicant through service in the best life of the race would not find in this experience a witness for the divine order of the world?

Paul was naturally an irritable man. Almost all persons worth anything are troubled with this form of weakness. It is the defect of their virtue. They are sensitive, full of zeal, full of insight and power. The tendency to impatience and irritability goes with these high qualities. Irri-

tability is simply unusual capacity to stimulation, to inspiration. The men who feel quickly and profoundly the appeals from the wise feel quickly and deeply the appeals from the foolish. A discord is a disaster to a Beethoven, because to him a harmony is a kind of heaven. The great, keen, intense, responsive soul has unusual privileges among the wise and unusual miseries among the foolish. There is little credit to an oyster for its calm; but there is a great deal of credit to a high-strung man or woman in the exercise of benign self-control.

There is one incident in Paul's life that shows his temper. He was called before the High Priest to answer for his behavior. The High Priest stood to Jewish society very much as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States stands to our citizens. The High Priest said something that was morally wrong; he commanded some one to smite Paul for what he had been saying. This outrageous command ignited a powder magazine in Paul's manhood. He shouted to the High Priest: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" Imagine a citizen using that style of address to the Chief Justice. Paul apologized and withdrew the offensive remark; nevertheless, the remark is illuminating, as it shows the capacity in him for sudden and terrible rage. And here was God's opportunity.

Before life was done, under the divine discipline Paul had become one of the most patient, one of the most magnanimous, one of the most completely self-controlled men that ever trod the earth. Are these things not worth considering? Just as this world is the hero's chance to show himself a hero, so this world is God's chance to show his power in the redeemed manhood in it. Think well of the world that gives this chance both to man and to God.

Two contrasted conceptions of the highest human character appear in the ancient world. To the highest Greek thought the best human life was the self-sufficient. It is a noble conception with many elements of truth in it. It fails of completeness because it isolates man from the sympathetic heart of the universe, from the store of strength that exists for man in the Infinite soul. The self-sufficient life is unattainable; its ideal carries with it something of pride and disdain, and it does not reckon with the weakness of mortal existence. A few rare souls, because of fortunate instinctive receptivities toward the Eternal helper of men, may climb high in the composure of self-sufficient manhood. Alas! for the vast majority, if man must be his own maker, if there be no One mightier than he working with him and in him. Indeed, there is no such thing as self-sufficiency. While we live,

we nourish the body out of the infinite; when we live our best, we nourish the heart out of home, friendship, history, humanity; we live in God.

The gospel has nothing to say of self-sufficiency. Jesus says, "I can of my own self do nothing." Paul says, "Our sufficiency is of God." For the self-sufficient life of Greek thought we have the God-sufficient life of the gospel. In God we live and move and have our being. God is our refuge and strength. There is no hope for man but in God. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." This is the ideal that answers to human need. The weakness, the pain, the limitation, the thorn in the flesh is here; here it remains, destroying all hope of self-sufficiency, but making ready the soul for God's sufficiency. We shall attain the self-sufficient life when we can put our hand upon the hilt of Orion's sword; every morning we may awake in the consciousness of the sufficient grace of God.

Here is our difficulty. The world as it is, without God, is too much for us. We take our opportunity and we forget to give God his opportunity. You have seen a cloud in the shadow toward evening, cold, dark, unsightly, and you have seen that same cloud float into the path of the setting sun. You beheld it then no longer cold and dark, but all fair, all dyed, all glorified

in the blazing west. That cloud in the shadow is man without God. That cloud all light, all fire, all splendor in the path of the setting sun is man's humanity in the path of God, shot through with his love, purified and transfigured by his glorious Presence. For those who live in God the vain aspiration of Faust becomes experience and hope. Watching the setting sun Faust sings : —

> " But still doth he survive,
> Still speeds he on with life-diffusing beam —
> Oh ! that no wing uplifts me from the ground
> Nearer and nearer after him to strive!
> Then should I the reposing world behold
> Still in this everlasting evening glow.
> In vain the rugged mountain rears his breast
> With darkening cliff and cave to bar my way,
> Onward in heaven still onward is my flight, —
> Before me day — behind me is the night."

XVI

THE UPPER ROOM

"And when they were come in, they went up into the upper room, where they were abiding."

Acts i, 13.

WHAT are some of the human sources of wisdom and peace? That may seem to be a vain question to those who seek for the great answer to the needs of man's spirit outside the sphere of man's being. It is not vain to those who connect the best in man with the deepest in God. The horn of the old Norse god could not be emptied because the lower end of it rested in the sea; whoever tried to empty that horn tried to drain the inexhaustible sea. Man's soul is like that horn. In detachment it is weak, in isolation it is nothing. In its normal life it rests in God. It is great because it rests in Him. God stands in an eternal flood tide in the instincts, capacities, and experiences of prophetic souls. When we sound them for wisdom, inspiration, and peace, we find that we are sounding in God. When we seek a God beyond humanity, we are pursuing an illusion, we are chasing a shadow; when we turn to God in humanity, we find the Eternal help at our door.

The upper room stands at the heart of the New Testament. It is touched with an abiding and an inexpressible sanctity. It is involved with the highest thoughts, the loftiest feelings, the most exalted fellowships, and the divinest hopes. It is the sanctuary of the world's greatest faith; it is the centre of the world's profoundest sorrow and hope. It is only a symbol, but it is a symbol for the whole range of what is highest and best in faith and in life.

The upper room is first of all associated with Christ. There with his disciples he for the last time kept the Passover and turned that feast into the Lord's Supper. It is the sign of the sublimity of his teaching and spirit. There is the association of which the text speaks, the association between the upper room and the disciples. It is the token of the exaltation of purpose, experience, service, and fellowship to which they had been lifted. To these two, which in a sense cover everything, a third must be added. There was the upper room in which Dorcas, that dear friend of the poor, was laid after death, in which she was restored to life. It is the emblem of the world to which we raise the beloved and venerated dead, in which they come back to us with living power.

1. The sublimity of Christ is the fundamental and growing insight of all true readers of the New Testament. Great is the thought of God

which the last and greatest of Greek philosophers gave to the world. To have been able to sum up the universe in a Divine Thinker for whom all things exist, and who is infinitely above all things, was a great achievement. And yet the thought of God entertained by Greek philosophy at its best is far below the conception of God found in the prophets and psalmists of Israel. To have conceived of God as the Righteous Ruler of the world, inviting men into communion with his life, and compassionating the weak and sinful as a father pities his children, was a wondrous advance upon all preceding forms of faith. Into these old words Jesus put new worlds of meaning. Think what Jesus meant by righteousness, by pity, by fatherhood. Personality, love, compassion, the reign of righteousness, meant infinitely more for Jesus than for all other teachers. He often uses the words that they use, but his thought, his transcendent vision, is his own. The child uses the word love; it is a beautiful word, and carries a beautiful meaning upon its tongue. The mother uses the same word, but does it not stand for a vaster and holier world? In 1856 there were boys in England who used the word brave, and they put sincere passion into it; but what comparison is there between their use of the word and that of the men who made the charge of the Light Brigade? The Lord's Prayer

on the lips of Carlyle, when a child by his mother's side, in Ecclefechan, and the Lord's Prayer upon the lips of the lonely old man awaiting death in London fourscore years afterwards, are surely infinitely different. The question is, after all, one of meaning and not of words. Originality does not lie in phraseology, but in insight. The subjects of human thought were old even when Christ came. His originality lies where all true originality must ever lie, in the depth, the adequacy, the finality of the meaning which he put into the old words. He took the old words about God and the kingdom of God, about the soul and sin and righteousness, about forgiveness and service and life after death, and he filled them with a new and heavenly content. It is the same old table round which he gathers men, but the bread is now the bread of heaven. It is the same cup that he passes to his disciples, but it is now running over with the water of life. One man shows us a real, but poor, picture of Niagara, and we are thankful for that. Another with wondrous gift of speech describes the stupendous thing: and we add this to the picture and feel that we have gained much. Still another takes us to see the cataract itself. That is the supreme service. Greek philosophy is the picture real but imperfect, Hebrew prophecy is the inspired description, Jesus Christ is the im-

mediate, awestruck, and overwhelming vision of God.

But the sublimity of the teaching is less impressive than the sublimity of the character of Jesus. Thought is always easier than action, and therefore the perfect will is higher than the perfect vision. And no one can think of the upper room without thinking of the exaltation of the life that first conferred all its meaning upon that place. The wonder of its beginning, the one beautiful vision that we have of it in boyhood, the silence of its youth about which we can only dream, the last and greatest epoch in human history introduced on the day that Christ began his public ministry, the union in that ministry of an unspeakable service to the bodies and the minds and the souls of the multitudes who followed him, the revelation which he made at every step forward, not only of the glory of his intelligence, but also of the heights of his character, the revolution in faith, in ideals, in obligations, and in conduct that he inaugurated, the enmity that he encountered, the infamy to which he was subjected, the suffering as the perfect servant of God and man which he endured, are the great chapters that tell of the sublimity of the Founder of Christianity. The upper room stands for the sublime teaching and, yet more, for the sublime soul of Christ. Look upon him

at that last supper, and behold in his face and speech and spirit and manner the highest in human history. The first thing in our thought to-day is the sublimity of the Master who brings us to God that he may bring us to ourselves. The upper room tells first of all of the teaching that is the perfection of the world's faith about God and about man, and of the life that is wholly from above.

2. The second great meaning of the upper room is the inspiration of the disciples. They doubtless thought, as they gathered there, of the former gathering with their Master. The apostolic upper room took on depth and tenderness from the upper room of Christ, to which it answered. The first stood for the solitary glory of their Master; the second stood for the power of that Master out of the unseen over their souls.

Inspiration, that is the first great meaning of Pentecost. There came upon the Apostles through their faith and their fellowship and their prayer a flood of new power. New and wondrous insights into the meaning of Christ's mission came flocking in upon them like winged messengers from heaven, new appreciations of all that they had seen their Master do, of all that they had heard him speak, of all that they had beheld him endure. A whole world of interpretation rose upon them through their

thought and their worship, an interpretation of the career of Jesus Christ. And in closest union with this new and wondrous insight was intense and holy passion. The heavenly vision had come to them, and the power to follow it thrilled their whole existence. Out of this inspiration, an inspiration that involved both a heavenly vision and a heavenly passion, came the entire service, character, and power of their lives. The upper room was to the disciples the sign of a new and permanent inspiration, an inspiration that gradually changed all their thoughts, that slowly shaped all their feelings, that ultimately controlled their whole being and hope.

Have we no upper room? Did the first disciples alone possess this correspondence with the Master? Are his inspirations spent? Is there no place where we can gather, where we can open our whole being to the Highest, where through sincere penitence and honest prayer and brotherly fellowship and devout and reverent worship we may receive power from above?

Surely we need this inspiration from on high. All our instincts, all our feelings, all our powers, and all our opportunities may be taken hold of in either of two ways. We may run the higher down into the lower, or we may lift and transfigure the lower by the higher. Are not the noblest

among us the most deeply conscious that they are not dealing honorably by their life? How painfully conscious the best parents are of the fact that they have never yet risen to the upper ranges of parenthood! How profoundly true this is of noble friends, noble lovers, noble business men, noble citizens! We are living in relationships in which God has placed us; his purpose appears to us in these relationships as a mountain which we have never yet had strength to climb; and yet we know that until we do stand upon the summit of this mountain of the Lord, we shall never behold God's world as it is, we shall never be able to rejoice before God as we should.

Here is our terrible peril. For want of inspiration, for want of courage and strength, we miss the best in our life. We fail to rise, we sink. We take low visions of our own nature, low views of the order of relations in which men live, low views of our privileges, our joys, our opportunities and obligations. The highest and best use of life eludes us, we take our entire existence by the under side. Everywhere you see men missing the rich and high possibility. The capitalist lets humanity slip from his mastership, the laborer lets high-mindedness go from his service, the friend loses disinterestedness from his friendship, the lover allows honor and chivalry to fly from his love, the father fails to keep the awe and the joy

with which God filled his heart when he made him a father, the son drops from his sonhood the high respect that made it great, the citizen has consented to become conformed to the standard of the self-seeking politician. There is the sad story. The fall of Adam may be a myth; the fall of his descendants is the deepest and saddest thing in human experience. That old garden story with which the Bible opens has an everlasting symbolic value. It tells the story of the race through its story about the first man and woman. The high possibility was allowed to go; life was not taken to the loftiest level. The business of existence was permitted to drop, and all its interests lost their character, their influence, their power and joy. That is our life. We are unequal to life's highest possibility. It is capable of infinitely better things than we have done with it. It has ranges of truth and honor and love and joy that we have hardly seen, and upon which we have never set our dominion.

Here is our need of inspiration, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Here is the significance of our weekly gatherings in this place. We are here in fellowship, we are here to give thanks, to speak our inmost thought and want to the Infinite, to join in the worship that man may offer to the Eternal Father. We come here under the sense of the momentousness of living, sure that

this is a great universe in the bosom of which we are gathered, surmising at least that there is a hidden dignity in our souls, and somewhere, awaiting our discovery, a grandeur about our opportunities. Under this burdening sense of the greatness of life, with this confident guess about the possible worth of existence, with the sublime surmise that the universe may at any hour become for us a manifestation of Infinite Love, or with the desperate hope that all things may prove altogether better than our fears, we gather here. We look for insight and for passion. We need to see our path and to love it. The flood of light and the flood of love; for these we wait in this upper room. And as of old, the sanctuary is still one of the places where men are lifted above their low views, their tormenting doubts, their terrible fears, their unspoken blasphemies against the Highest. There men still see the horror of wickedness, and the truth and peace of a good life.

Insight and enthusiasm, — these are our needs. Life must become great in the discovery that it was made to be the servant of the righteous God. The routine of our days, the dull task, the unromantic duty, the prosaic fellowship, the whole order of existence from which all novelty, or even the hope of it, has long since fled, shines in wondrous light when with open eyes we look into the heart of God's law. Then there come together

two surprises, the surprise that what has been given us to do is so great, and the surprise that our hearts answer this call with fullness of power. Think of some wondrous singer, a Jenny Lind, singing the same piece over and over again till through wearing repetition it has shrunken to a petty thing, all at once, on some bright morning, upon taking the first notes of the really great song, as by a flash of light seeing into the heart of its greatness. What happens? Instantly the voice greatens to the greatness of the task. The new insight awakens the new passion, and calls forth the new power. Range after range of voice reveals itself, new capacities rise up out of the depths and sing out of the heights. The inspired instrument runs up and down the scale like angel feet upon the ladders that reach from earth to heaven. The singer, lost in the sense of the greatness of the song, is amazed at the compass, the character, the fire and power of her own voice. She found God in the piece, and she is overawed as she looks inward to find God in her own power. That is the surprise of life. While we wait in the upper room, while we wait in prayer and fellowship, the great light comes. The poor petty task looms up into unspeakable greatness, and while we look on it in wonder and delight, the great answer forms itself in our hearts. As we take up the old song of existence

in this new revelation of its transcendent meaning, the great inward surprise comes. New concentrations of mind, new comprehensions issuing in high and settled wisdom, new depths of love and strength of purpose and power of execution, amaze the soul. In finding God in our duty, we discover God in the range and richness and mastery of our own powers. In the upper room we wait for the inspiration of the spirit of God.

3. And up into that sanctuary we should carry our dead. The Dorcas story has a wonderful hint in it for all who stand in the great succession of sorrow. In the upper room the dead was laid, in the upper room the dead came back to life. I believe that if we carry our dead to the highest in our nature, they will assuredly live again for us in ever richer power.

Where shall we lay our dead? Shall we put them as soon as we can in the dark chamber of forgetfulness? Shall we lower them into the dungeon of doubt? Shall we retain them in the room of regret and grief, that we may forever cover them with our tears? Surely our noble dead, they who have fought the good fight, deserve something better at our hands. Let us show our immortal honor for them by carrying them to the highest within our souls, and there in the uppermost room of peaceful faith in God, in sweet reconciliation to his will, in devoutest

thankfulness and in dearest remembrance of the good that they have done us, let us lay them there. In highest honor and gratitude and hope, let them forever rest. They deserve to rest there. And while they seem dead, while the absent apostle tarries, and they look as if they had bidden us an eternal farewell, they will still fill the whole of that life in whose highest venerations they are laid with the peace of God.

"Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop,
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's,
He 's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders;
This is our Master, famous, calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.
Here 's the top-peak, the multitude below
Live, for they can there:
This man decided not to live but know —
Bury this man there?
Here — here 's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying."

But this is not the end. In a way so easily and grossly caricatured the dead do return to life. They come back in wisdom, in love, in all high faith and deep feeling. They come back in power. The dead fathers and mothers of the world, through the pious and loving memory and imagination of their children, still do much to guide and bless the world. Any soul that one has ever really known, any spirit from whom one has really drawn wisdom and courage for the struggle of life, cannot be taken away by death. We miss the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still, but upon the heart the hand is mightier, upon the soul the voice is deeper. Nothing is more true, nothing is more a part of the higher life of mankind, than this increase of power after death of those who have been revered and loved upon those who have revered and loved them. Our Lord told his disciples that it was expedient for them that he should go away. They did not, they could not believe it. But before they came to the end of life, they felt the truth of his words. The unseen Christ was the mightier Christ. The disciples laid their Lord in their highest veneration, in their most thankful love, and he returned to them, and filled their lives with the tokens of his power. This is the law of the kingdom of God. We live out of the invisible. When we

are at our best, the unseen God, the unseen Christ, the unseen dead whom we dearly love and gratefully remember, are a part of our existence. If power is the final test of reality, our dead are most real, they are at our side in the great spiritual communion in which we stand.

I have spoken as if there were three upper rooms, that of the divine Christ, that of the inspired disciple, that of heavenly sorrow and resurrection. The three are really one. Christ is in the first; that is plain. He is in the second, for the inspiration is from him. And he is in the third, for in his name the dead Dorcas was restored to life. He is in the third, for without him, — his teaching, his personal triumph over death, his power over the soul, his representative value Godward and manward, — sorrow cannot be lifted to the eternal light and transfigured there; without him our dead cannot live again for us. The three are one, and that one upper room is a possibility in every life.

The upper room is indeed part of the constitution of our human nature. It is assumed as real for man in the great appeal, "Seek the things that are above." It is the great basal assumption of all religion. It is indeed here that Christianity is strongest. It reveals the heights in man's soul, and it calls him up on to the heights. It fills him with two great convic-

tions: first, that it is possible for him to become a good man; and, second, that he is able so to govern the trials of his existence in this world as to make them issue in strength and richness of heart. Christianity is first revelation and second deliverance. The revelation becomes deliverance. The upper room is shown, and then begins its endless appeal.

Christianity as revelation is to-day accepted among all serious minds. It is the best account that we have of man and man's interests. It brings into view more of man and more of the better man than any other teaching. As the intellectual valuation of human existence, Christianity is supreme and without a rival. Our best thinking in all spheres of the humanities is but the new adaptation of the fundamental ideas in the teaching of Jesus. In the face of the entire revolution of opinion concerning the Bible, wrought chiefly by historical criticism, it is still true that Christianity as revelation, as the final account of man and man's interests, has won the serious judgment of the world.

Where is the deliverance? Where is the deliverance from the weakness of the will, from the disease of the intellect, from the baseness of the heart? We seem to have the vision, and still we are without the power! And we ask why it is that the revelation which at once became

deliverance in the days of Jesus and his Apostles with us remains revelation and nothing more. We believe, we entertain the vision, and we are still in our sins.

What is the source of this woe? Insincerity, that deadliest enemy of man, secret, subtle, pervasive insincerity. Our Christianity lies outside of us, like food on the table which we see, but which we have not yet eaten. Our vision is of a foreign substance; we are playing at believing. We build ourselves into compartments; the intellect is one compartment, the heart is another, the will yet another. We open the intellect to the Christian vision; occasionally we expose feeling to the Christian appeal; the will we protect against the Christian law, we reserve it for the selfish and base uses of life. Here is our trouble. We let the light into the front room of our dwelling; we bar the door against its advance upon the bed of the sleeper. Light opens closed eyes; light rushes through opened eyes in upon the brain, rousing into action every organ in the body, and setting the man upon his feet. Unless it is checked, Christianity as vision becomes inevitably Christianity as action. Unless we bar its path, Christianity as light rushes through the intellect, through the feelings, on into the will. Unless we divert it, Christianity as faith issues in Christianity as works. If we believe, and

still are held in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, we may be sure that there is in us some deadly insincerity. It is this that is holding us down. It is this inward, subtle dishonesty that is depriving us of the whole mighty practical blessing of the gospel. Deliverance is the last and greatest aspect of our faith, the deliverance of them that are bound. Freedom is the deepest cry of the human spirit, freedom is the sovereign blessedness of the human soul. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," but there must be no compartments in the life of the knower, the tide of truth from the Eternal must be allowed to sweep into the inmost recess of the personal will.

I have said that the upper room is part of the constitution of human nature. It is sad to reflect that in multitudes it is a vacant room. There is no Christ in it, no inspiration, no sacred sorrow, no resurrection. This is the deepest tragedy in the world, that the highest in man is in disuse. Where is that vacant guest-chamber? The Master desires to keep the Passover there in your soul, and in that upper room of your nature reveal the sublimity of his nature and love. There he desires that you should abide. Live on the heights. There through the prayer, and the human fellowship, and the ineffable communion, wait for the coming of the great inspiration.

And there he directs that you should carry your dead. Lay them in your highest faith, in your loftiest veneration and dearest love. Be sure your sorrow will then become a heavenly sorrow, and your dead will return to you in the power of an endless life.

XVII

GOD THE COMFORTER

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever."

John xiv, 16.

WONDER and awe are among the earliest responses of the soul to the appeal of the Infinite; they remain among the latest. We have seen in the clear and happy eyes of a child just beginning to note here and there some great feature of our strange world, the sense of fascination and mystery as it looked up into the infinite spaces; and we have seen in the dim and sorrowful vision of age the image of the same feeling. The thing that forever fascinates and baffles, that draws us on to inquire into it, and that covers us with the shadow of a vast dread, is this solemn, beautiful, mysterious universe. We wrestle with it in the darkness, we call to it, "Tell me thy name;" the morning comes, the mystery with which we have wrestled eludes us, and we are left blessed, it may be, but bruised. The manna in the wilderness was not understood; its name was a question. What is it? — that was the cry of the people as they beheld this desert wonder. They could not account for it,

it remained an enigma; therefore they named it, What is it? If we consult our sincerest and deepest thoughts about the universe, we shall find them mainly interrogations. The sum of things in heaven above and on earth beneath, other than man, the total life of the race in the present and in the past, and the power by which this wondrous whole is pervaded, we call the universe, and the inmost meaning of the name is, What is it? Like the manna, it is sweet and it supports life; but the final and full account of it we are unable to give. The first act of worship, the act that includes all serious and noble men, is the worship of the Inscrutable.

This mood, however, does not remain unfruitful. Men investigate and think; they live and reach conclusions; they come to look at the universe in a great variety of ways. To one man it seems at heart matter; all thought, all feeling, and all character are incidental; the substance of the universe is physical, it is an ever changing physical show, with here and there a strain of thought and feeling, like the band that now and then plays in the grim hour of battle. To another it is force; to still another law; to yet another fate. The force is there, its ways are fixed, and it is operated by a necessity blind, dumb, eternal.

In contrast with all this, in the text the uni-

verse is said to be, at its heart, mind; it is assumed to be personal, it is named the Comforter. This is the Christian way of looking at the universe.

1. First of all there is the audacity of this interpretation. In the face of all disorder, all silence, all apparent indifference to man, all pain, all loss, all death, the universe is gathered into the Infinite Comforter! Could there be a more audacious conception than that? Is it not as if one were to look for pity from the tempest, or sympathy from the cold and speechless stars? Is it not as if one should regard the wild and angry sea as a friend, and the more of a friend the wilder and the angrier it is? Is not the universe essentially hostile? Its boundlessness, its mystery, its silence, and its settled disdain, are these the tokens of its regard? When men hunt the wild beast, or go among savage tribes, or venture among unfriendly forces, they go armed; they do not expect mercy from a tiger, sympathy from a Hottentot, consideration from a cannibal. When the California gold was first carried from the mines, the bearer was preceded and followed by a soldier, rifle in hand; the environment was hostile, the guarded treasure alone was safe. Should we not imitate this procedure? Should we not fortify ourselves against our enemies; build towers like that of the men of Babel, only

stronger; proceed on the supposition that our human treasure is under constant menace, that the eye of an infinite robber is upon us, and that there is no security except in the vigilant and militant arm?

Look at the situation. We are born in utmost frailty. If left to the tender mercy of the woods, the winds, the seasons, the wild beasts, if abandoned to the sympathy of nature, we should perish in a day. The homes into which we were born were built to shield us from the angry cosmos; clothing is prepared for us as a further protection. Our liability to sickness means that our frail life is beset with countless enemies. The climate is too severe, or the air is foul with the germs of disease, or the water that we drink holds death in solution, or the foods that we eat conceal the life that means pain to us and perhaps destruction. What is civilization but the strenuous, eonian effort to overcome the hostility of nature, to mitigate her antagonism, to crowd her back from our properly human domain, to pile up the instruments and the material resources whereby we can reduce her power to work us harm, whereby we can repair the unpreventable injuries which she inflicts upon man! What is civilization but the glorious record of man's victory over the unrelenting enmity of the cosmos! What is our whole

achievement inside the bounds of nature but the confession that nature is never enough, that she is never wholly to be trusted, that we can never safely meet her except with our harness on our backs! The Hollander has rescued his country from the sea; he holds it in defiance of the sea, and the thunder of its tides against the walls that he has built reminds him that his enemy is still close at hand, and wild with greed to invade and recover. Such seems our human world, a domain snatched from infinite hostility, held by high device and amazing stratagem against the never ceasing attack of the cosmos, a world of justice and love encircled by a boundless waste of wild, implacable enmity. While the race holds this domain in defiance of the cosmos, the individual loses; generations of individuals perish, and the end would seem to be the defeat not of the cosmos, but of man. Even Gibraltar could not stand out forever; even that fortress could be starved into surrender. Is not our human world a sort of mighty fortress under siege at the hands of the universe? We are many, we have learned the methods of cosmical attack, we are well provisioned and at present comparatively secure; but what hope is there in the endless contest that we shall be victorious? Is not our enemy too much for us? In view of all this, is it not an audacious thing

to regard the universe as at heart the Infinite comfort?

In reply to this it should be said that there is nature and there is human nature. And the universe that is revealed in nature as against us is revealed in human nature as on our side. God is against us, in part at least, in nature; He is for us, in part at least, in human nature. It is He who has taught our hands to war in our campaign against nature; it is from Him that the spirit of insight, discovery, use, and power has come. And this outward antagonism may be but inspiration to the inward friendliness; even as the eagle, whose eagle nature is in her brood, stirs up the nest under them, breaks it to pieces, that the royal spirit in them may leave the earth for the sky. The Infinite is in the pure air, the favoring seasons, the fruitful earth, the amenableness of nature to cultivation, the elasticity with which it may be turned to human uses; the Infinite is in the biting wind, the wild sea, the malarial swamp, the polluted well, the germs of disease, the black wings of death as they beat about us, to rouse, to educate, to force man back upon himself, to compel him to seek the society of his kind, to drive him in upon the resources of the soul; and the Infinite is in man in his expansive and marvelous intelligence, in his capacities for love and sympathy, in his conscience and its law of right-

eousness, in his will and its power to subdue the wild cosmos, in its power to incarnate in human society the vision of the City of God. God in nature is both against us and for us; God in man is both against us and for us; and the vast, ceaseless antipathy is in the interest of the still vaster and sublimer sympathy. It is therefore a reasonable audacity that claims the universe as the Comforter of man.

2. In this conception of the universe as at heart a universe of comfort lies much of the power of Christianity. Christianity is indeed the religion of the morally victorious soul; it is in an emphatic sense the religion of righteousness. It calls for the new heaven and the new earth; it gives the vision of the righteous God, and it lays upon those who entertain this vision the obligation to reform human society. The call to serve, to achieve, is the trumpet call of the gospel. Christianity has the utmost fascination for the morally capable, for all those who are conscious of achieving power, who exult in the sense of a sound and an aspiring humanity, whose reforming instinct rises to passion, and who delight in life because it holds within itself the energy that would renew the world.

We must never forget that religion has always begun here. The religion of Moses was a religion of righteousness. Here was his race in bondage,

that bondage was an outrage upon their humanity, an injustice that cried to heaven. The religion of Moses began in the vision of the righteous God and in the passion for reform under that vision. Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, every great soul in the history of Israel, followed in the footsteps of Moses. John the Baptist, when he came, repeated the same sublime experience; religion was the vision of the righteous God, and the obligation under that vision to renew the world. Christianity is here only another and a vaster version of the same thing; its initial words are: "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness." The sublimity of its vision of God made obsolete the earlier visions; it fascinated the elect youth of the time of Jesus; it fascinated Stephen and Paul; it has exercised a resistless charm over the highest spirits in every succeeding generation. Christianity is first of all an appeal to the morally fit.

It is more. It is an appeal to the morally unfit. It is the religion of reconciliation. It finds man with a vision of the better life and with an incapacity for obedience. It finds him like the eaglet, with eyes for the free heaven, but with no wings to lift it thither; it finds him like the paralytic, with the vision of the ideal, but without the power of attainment. Here it revolutionized the life of Paul; it gave him a sublimer

vision, and it gave him a power of achievement wholly new. And from that day to this Christianity has gone on its way imparting vision to the blind, and creating power in the heart of moral paralysis and despair. The spring comes and the frozen earth is free; the spring comes and the meadow, ugly with its burden of dead grass, blooms again; the spring is here and every blackened tree with its leafless boughs is covered with life and beauty; the spring is here and the face of the world is lifted into accord with the vision of loveliness. So Christianity works. It goes like a great tide of life; it renews the fountains of human nature, opens the springs of moral power in man's heart, puts creative might in the soul, moves a despairing humanity into song. It is the religion of reconciliation.

It is more. It is the religion of comfort. There is surely comfort in the vision of the righteous God and the passion for reform set free in human hearts under that vision. There is indeed comfort in the wonderful experience whereby despairing men are made capable of the noblest life, whereby the sinful and erring are filled with moral hope and charged with moral power. Christianity as the religion of comfort does not exhaust itself in these great inspirations. Man has needs as a suffering being, as a lover and as a loser.

One of the profoundest of all human necessi-

ties concerns the treasure of the loving heart. The fortunate human being has made a vast investment of himself in other human beings; he is a lover, it may be an intense, a devoted, and a grateful lover. The treasure of life is not money, it is not fame, it is not power, it is love; and whether it is the child's life in the life of its parents, or the life of the parents in the life of their children, the consciousness of a divine possession under fearful menace is at times the acutest of all pains. The call of the heart is for protection. The need of the heart is protection. Can you trust your child to wander unprotected in the jungle? Can you live with the sense of the dear lives in whom you have invested your soul under a menace unmitigated, a peril between which and them there is no shield? Can you live in peace without the consciousness that the Giver of life is the Protector of it, without the faith that the heart's greatest interests are God's greatest interests, without the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God?

Christianity comes, then, with its message of comfort to man the lover; it assures him that what is dear to him is infinitely dear to God. The father whom you revere, the mother whom you honor, the child to whom the whole tenderness of your soul goes out, the friend whom you

count part of yourself, the many noble fellow servants in whom you have allowed yourself to make a permanent investment of affection, — for all these there is a cover in the Eternal Lover, for all these there is a refuge in the Eternal Friend.

How beautiful is that Old Testament conception of the City of Refuge! Thither in their error and misfortune and weakness men could fly; once there, they were safe from the pursuer. According to Christian faith, such a city of refuge is our God. Thither in all ages loving souls have gone; inside its golden gates they have laid the precious burden of their hearts. Thither the young have gone in moments of extreme anxiety, weeping and wondering whether the horror was to be theirs of the untimely loss of father and mother, and there they have found rest. Fathers and mothers looking upon their children in health and reading the record of the daily work of death, looking upon their children in sickness and watching the curtain trembling between them and the unseen, have gone up into that city of comfort and there have entered into the infinite peace. When households have been sundered by the cruel hand of fate, when brothers and sisters have been driven to the ends of the earth, the old mother, left to think of her brood wide apart as east and west, has gone for comfort to the infinite sheltering

presence of God. In the shadow of his wings there is peace.

Christianity is first of all the religion of lovers. It is the religion for those who feel the preciousness of existence; it has been to all who love an infinite comfort. It was so while Jesus lived. He early made his religion the religion of home; he put it to the service of anxious and deep-hearted parents; he poured it as comfort into the souls of the troubled and the loving men and women of his time. What he did for those whose treasure was love, and whose love was under menace, cannot be told. It was a service immeasurable in amount, and inconceivably precious. Since Jesus lived, parenthood and love have been easier. The life of the lover, if there be no infinite comfort, is of all lives the most tragic. The most awful of all relations is that of parent in a universe without love and sympathy. In a universe where this is not clear, where it is not sure, where it is only a dim guess, a pale and fitful hope, surely the fate of the lover is hard. To receive from the universe the supreme gift, the gift of a great, disinterested, undying love, and not to be able to believe that the universe has for the human heart thus visited any sympathy, any refuge, must appear in moments of vivid feeling an appalling condition. Could there be for the human parent a worse fate than that pictured in

Niobe! That story of the mother and her children in a universe not only unsympathetic but cruel, is to me the most awful in the annals of the race. Love and parenthood in such a universe are the supreme calamity; there is no place for them, they are too good for the brutal world. Under ideas like these millions of our fellow men have suffered; to such suffering millions the gospel of the eternal comfort came; the family life of Christendom became a new thing, parenthood and love became the supreme human privilege, and God offered himself as the city of refuge for all anxious, loving souls.

Man is not only a lover; he is also a loser. Death comes, and the souls that are as parts of one organism are torn asunder. Death is the great desolator. It is still the king of terrors, the supreme horror of all who love. Its ravages cannot be averted. Men are born to love, and they are born to die. In this order of birth and love and death and loss the generations of men move. What comes but hopeless grief, absolute despair, when this order is unillumined out of the Eternal? What religion is possible other than the religion of pity in the presence of the infinite tragedy in human history? If the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," covers the whole man, what can virtue do with the life of a worm or a fly? If men

in their grief count for nothing to the Eternal, existence is misery, the supreme calamity is to be born, the supreme sin is parenthood. If this life is all, it is not worth having; it is a calamity to all who love while they live. If this life is all, those who continue the succession of births are the most reckless and heartless among human beings. How can they be unmindful of the tender hearts of those whom they bring into being! How can they live regardless of the woe to which they introduce helpless souls!

Christianity comes to the lover who is a loser with its vision of the Infinite Father and his house of many mansions. Thither go the dear dead fathers and mothers; thither go the youth slain in the service of the race, run down by the awful car of human civilization; and thither go the bands of little children, — look up and see them dressed not in swaddling-bands, but in singing-robes. The child choir in heaven is the only part of earth's music translated from this world to the heavenly that even the angelic songs cannot match. Look up and listen. That is the vision that sustains the bewildered mind of sorrowing parenthood; that is the music that finally makes the grief of fathers and mothers an infinite solace.

Christianity is kept in the world by the reformer; it is kept in the world by those who

seek escape from the hell of their sins and weaknesses; but more than all, it is kept in the world by loving men and women who know that life has in it infinite treasure, and among these the lovers who have lost, hold with the strongest hand the gospel of the Eternal Comforter.

3. This great faith is offered to experience. It submits itself to the process of proof in the course of experience. We are called upon to put to the test this conception of the infinite comfort; we are to test it nobly, deeply, to the end, in the whole endeavor of existence; we are to accept it as an ideal for the regulation of existence; we are to receive it as a faith to be verified in the history of the soul, in the history of all believing souls.

We believe that we may know; that is the fundamental mood of the intelligent disciple of Christ. It was not at the beginning, it was at the end of his career that Paul said, "I know him whom I have believed." His life had begun with the acceptance of a vast and precious faith; his whole career had been a process of experimentation, whereby what he received as faith had been verified in experience as the truth. He began with the belief, he subjected his life to his belief, his life thus subjected took on new strength and broke like the morning into joy; he ended with the belief verified, turned into know-

ledge. The method of the Apostle is the method of all sound science. Science begins with belief; the great process of observation and experiment eliminates false belief, purifies and expands sound belief, and turns it at last into clear and accurate knowledge. If the attitude of the scientist is sound, the attitude of the disciple of Christ is sound. He accepts as faith the idea of the infinite comfort, he gives it a chance to verify its truth in the process of human endeavor and suffering; if it stands the test of life, it is true.

It is impossible to imagine any other path to certainty. No one can tell in advance whether or not food of a certain kind will be found wholesome in an individual case; to settle that, we must eat and drink. We use the experience of our parents, the advice of our friends, the general wisdom of the ages about human foods; but the wholesomeness of a particular food for a particular person is not proved until it is eaten. A surgeon cannot say in advance that a critical operation will surely be successful; he may think it likely, extremely likely, almost certain, but the result alone can banish all doubt. The wisest lawyer in the land cannot be sure of winning his case; he may believe that all law is on his side, that all justice is there; he may be confident and full of hope, but until the judge has delivered his opinion, he cannot know. The captain of a

great steamer is never sure when he leaves one port that he will reach another. He knows his ship; he knows the sea. The ship is not new; she has weathered under his command the gales of many winters, but this voyage may prove her last. The captain does not believe so; he believes that she will trace again her victorious path from shore to shore. In that faith he goes forth. The faith is so strong that head winds do not disturb him, thick fogs do not discourage him, seas beating upon him with the force of hurricanes in them do not bring dismay. He is a confident and a brave man; his ship is good, and he believes that he can weather the roughest gale that ever wind did blow. We admire his faith, but we see clearly that he cannot know.

When the revolutionists founded this country on the principle of equality and brotherhood in citizenship, they believed that the nation they founded would endure; they believed that the minds and hearts of the colonists were prepared for it, that there was in them a race fitness for self-government, that the conception of a vast democracy would more and more command their intelligence, root itself in their affections, support itself out of the resourceful will of the great body of free men. So far, time has proved that they were right in their faith. But in advance of the test of time, proof is impossible.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." What proof could there be of that statement? Doubtless he saw into the souls of men; doubtless he knew the supreme harmony that exists between his gospel and the best in man; but the vision of a divine adjustment between his gospel and the human heart is not proof that his kingdom or his word shall last forever. It has lasted; it is likely to last; it is nearly sure to last; all this we may say, but that it shall certainly last is a proposition that cannot be proved. Time alone can determine.

No one can say with certainty what books produced in our generation will find readers in the next. The classic is known to after-generations; it is never known to the generation that witnessed its production. One might as easily say who, if any, among a million children are born to fame, as to tell which, if any, among a million books are destined to live. No one can say what the absorbing interests of the next generation will be, or what will be its literary tastes, its scientific attitude, its philosophical mood, its political ideals, or in what paths its highest energies shall move. These are things about which we may have beliefs, and the beliefs may have in their favor very high likelihood; but certainty is impossible until the next

generation shall arrive. In his farewell words to his judges Socrates says: "The hour has come to go away, I to death and you to life; but which of us shall fare the better is hid from all save God." That covers the entire life of man; in advance of the fact we cannot know; we believe, and we wait for the verification of belief.

Our hearts are in our keeping, but what the universe has appointed us, we do not know until our years are fully told. The Greek conception of Destiny is an abiding conception; we know our destiny when we have reached it. The threads of existence are spun, the web of reality is woven by hands other than ours; what is ordained we learn through the courses of life. The silken threads, and the bold and beautiful devices of those that spin and those that weave, the fineness and the splendor of the great fabric of being, are known alone to the eyes that look upon them out of the courses of a great Christian experience. With our eyes upon the ever-coming thread, the ever-flying and ever-weaving shuttle, we may have the best of reasons for hope, but we cannot know what the completed design will be.

What does all this mean? That the proof to which our religion of comfort is open is the only kind of proof obtainable upon any subject what-

soever. It all comes up out of the achieving and suffering life of man. A Hebrew psalmist sings: "Oh, how love I thy law!" In the wildness of youth if some one had told him that in the happiest life love and law were one, he would have regarded the remark as incredible. Law is compulsion, love is freedom; how can these unite? There is no logic by which the union can be made clear; but life, the courses of experience, the hours of bitterness and of hope, the whole sweep and discipline of existence, issue in this fair conclusion that love and law are one in the supremely happy soul. Another Hebrew psalmist sings: "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Possibly in his early and reckless years that statement would have seemed to him foolishness. Those musty old rules about behavior, those maxims for the regulation of thought and feeling and conduct, with the mildew of centuries upon them, those words that seem but the jargon of persons who have outlived their zest for nature and the spontaneous life of man among his kind, how can they become songs? Can you make poetry out of modern statutes? Can you make diamonds out of dust-heaps? Can you lift into the realm of art the vulgar life of vulgar men? Can you transmute into songs the severe compulsions of the moral law? Experience alone can answer

that question. Experience does answer it. Moral law through the experience of the dutiful soul becomes the sublimest of all human songs, the profoundest of all human inspirations. Hear Wordsworth: —

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong."

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? That was the question of Nathaniel when Philip said to him, "We have found the Christ." That question any sincere man may put concerning all high beliefs about the universe. The universe often seems like an infinite Nazareth; it is boundless but mean. It seems sterile as the desert, and men have suffered so much under the sun that they have become profoundly skeptical, profoundly unbelieving. Can any good thing come out of this vast, hollow, empty, mocking universe? The reply is the reply of Philip to Nathaniel, "Come and see." Come with honest eyes to the great thought of the universe as the eternal comfort, come and do its bidding as it speaks to you in the teaching, in the example,

and in the spirit of Jesus; take his yoke upon you, learn of him, become his disciple, walk in the paths of his service, submit to the high moral discipline to which he submitted, accept his thought of the eternal comfort as your faith, live under it, live by it, give it a fair chance to prove its truth, open your heart to the highest of all human conceptions. It may be that it will prove itself the eternal truth. Come and see. Accept as faith the eternal comfort; work as a great-hearted servant; suffer as a believer, and open all the windows of your being to the eternal sympathy. It may be that in life and in death you will discover that you are the Lord's.

The universe is great, life is deep, and things are not what they seem. The universe is great, and hiding in its heart of mystery, waiting there for the fitting human mood, stands the eternal comfort. Life is deep. I sometimes think that as the sea in its unfathomed depth is to that which the greatest ship touches and cleaves, so is the abyss of the human heart to the mightiest understanding. The understanding at its profoundest is shallow compared with the unsounded depths of the moral nature of man. When this mysterious human soul becomes a servant of moral ends, when it walks in reverence and holds itself for the coming of the kingdom of love and as the refuge of weakness and distress, its own

nature begins to reveal its grandeur as the structure of the earth rose when the flood began to abate. Then man becomes aware of the range and mystery of his being, of the laws and forces that live and work within him, of the moral will of God articulated in the order of his spirit. Then the heart is filled with awe under the sense of the infinite benignity that now and then blows through it, sometimes in the soft winds and again in the strong gales of high delight. Then the human heart becomes a great musical instrument, on which at times are played all sweet melodies, all heroic strains, through which is given the mystic sense of the eternal harmony at the heart of God. In the pilgrimage of duty the heart breaks into song; a dutiful and tender humanity becomes inevitably a singing humanity. Woe leaves the faithful soul on the wings of gladness; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. When the heart is thus sustained at its task, comforted in its sorrow, and drawn out in song, men find it easy to believe in the Eternal consoler. In the suffering and serving life of good men there are moments when the highest faith receives complete attestation. So it was with Moses on Horeb; Isaiah in the Temple; Paul on his way to Damascus; John in Patmos. So it has been with all the true and the brave.

The great moments of life are few and brief, yet by these we are to believe and serve. If the fortunate mariner were to count the bright days, clear from morning to night, which have come to him in his service upon the deep, he would find them few compared with those that are dark and troubled. He thinks himself happy if no day pass without some bright moment at noon or at sunset. That is enough; that one moment, that brief glance, is worth all the rest of the day. By that he discovers again the order of the world and finds his place in the pathless sea. Through the moments of insight, of inward triumph, of reconciliation to the will of the Highest, we are to reach the character of the universe, we are to assure our hearts. These few supreme moments are of more worth than all the long, uninspired years. Then our eyes rest on the infinite order of life, on the infinite sanctity of life, on the infinite benignity of the universe. By these sovereign sunlit moments we are to determine what to believe, what to do, what to expect; by them we are to verify our faith in the eternal comfort, and hold to our course when the wild sea is again blackening under the frowning heaven, home to the waiting heart of God.

XVIII

TOWARD EVENING

"It is toward evening, and the day is now far spent."
Luke xxiv, 29.

WHAT a great day that had been! The morning had found them in the heaviness of a universal sorrow. As the dreadful hours passed, the two disciples roused themselves sufficiently to undertake the walk to Emmaus. They went slowly, for there was solace in the utterance of their sad thoughts. A mysterious stranger joined them as they journeyed onward. He drew from them the complete confession of their confusion and despair. He made their hearts burn with surprise and hope by the profoundly beautiful view which he took of the cause of their grief. He put his new and unexpected thought about the death of Jesus into their minds, to the absolute exclusion of their own. And when they came to their journey's end, it seemed to them that they had been walking in a divine dream. They could not allow their mysterious fellow traveler to go uninvited to their home. Something inexpressibly great had taken hold of them, and in the name of that they constrained the wondrous stranger,

saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent; and he went in to abide with them." The morning heaviness, the walk and the human relief, the divine companion and interpretation, the full and mighty answer of the heart, the evening with the risen Christ standing in its reddening glow and peace, — such were the supreme things in that great day. And that one great day in the experience of those two disciples of Christ sets a type for all the disciples of Christ. As was the day, so may be the life.

1. The morning heaviness was the first thing. For the third time those two disciples had awakened to a world that had no Christ, or only a dead Christ, in it. A divine presence had been taken out of the world. The loveliness of nature seemed to be tarnished, Jerusalem had become the city of despair, Israel was again hopeless, love and friendship were bereaved of their great consecration, and the heart of the individual disciple was vacant and disconsolate. Such was the tragedy under which those two disciples awakened on the morning of that eventful day.

For how many disciples of Christ in the last century that is typical of the beginning of their spiritual life! How many have come to manhood in the fellowship of a traditional faith, to discover then that their faith was dead! Romanes through the influence of physical science

wakes to that horror; John Stirling through inability to find his way comes to that heaviness; Tennyson loses everything in the loss of his friend; Carlyle looks upon a godless universe under the power of a false philosophy. For the best youth of the nineteenth century the beginnings of spiritual life were hard. For thousands of young men and women in the colleges of the land there has been this terrible awakening. The Lord's Prayer which they learned in infancy, the Beatitudes whose music has been in their hearts from their earliest years, the Divine Christ to whom they have looked in awe and love, the Eternal God, their fathers' God, in whom they have steadfastly believed, become all at once uncertain, unreal, powerless. They awake to find them gone. There is no room for prayer in their world, the Beatitudes are an embarrassment in the struggle for existence; Christ has no place in the order of the universe; and in the mechanism of the sum of things there does not seem to be any Heavenly Father. They have dreamed the terrible dream of Richter; they awake with the awful announcement ringing in their hearts: Children, you have no Father.

This is the trouble with many of our young men and women. Christianity is beautiful, but it does not answer to the stern realities of life.

It is too good to be true; the order of existence accords with no such dream. For those two disciples, on that morning, Christ was in his grave. For many young persons, terribly in earnest, Christianity is a sublime vision at war with the nature of things. They cannot believe. The faith that they have inherited has become incredible. They do not boast of this incapacity for belief; the nobler among them mourn over it. Many console themselves with the melancholy conclusion: —

> "This little life is all we must endure.
> The grave's most holy peace is ever sure,
> We fall asleep and never wake again;
> Nothing is of us but the mouldering flesh,
> Whose elements dissolve and merge afresh
> As earth, air, water, plants and other men."

What shall we say to these things? Let us remember that these suffering souls are only in the first stage of spiritual life. They have the sense, as never before, of the beauty of the faith that they have lost. They are asking questions that endless time alone can fully answer. They are planting their feet upon the real world. They are getting ready to become men. Do not grieve over them, only try to keep them pure. The peril of the loss of faith is that it so often leads to the loss of honor. Goethe has drawn this danger in Faust. Faust as the believer in

knowledge is pure; Faust defeated in his endeavors to compass the truth turns to a life of shame. There is here the revelation of a law. The loss of faith tends toward the loss of character. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Life's high significance is bound up with faith; and life's high significance once gone, the tendency is downward. Call upon the young to resist that tendency. Remind them of F. W. Robertson's fine resolve. In the blackest hour of doubt he saw that right was right, that honor was honor, and to that he bound his spirit. The voice of despair wild with mad joy still cries: —

> "And now at last authentic word I bring,
> Witnessed by every dead and living thing;
> Good tidings of great joy for you, for all:
> There is no God."

Many noble young souls are saying in reply to this voice that, if there be no God to love them, no Christ to own them, no eternal righteousness to crown them, they will so live that the beauty of their life shall be a nameless rebuke to the brutal universe that would degrade them before destroying them. Only keep these fine souls from following in the footsteps of Faust, only hold them in the mood of Robertson of Brighton, and you may well give thanks over their perplexity and pain.

No man who has not won his faith through

suffering can to-day count for much. He cannot understand our time; that time is a call away from mere conventions to eternal realities. It insists that men shall live in the strength of things, go in the immediate vision of them, lean upon them without intermediary of any kind — tradition, creed, miracle, or high personal authority — for support. The times have taken our crutches from us and hidden them. If we walk, it must be on our feet and by our own strength. The man who has not thus been thrown back upon the Eternal cannot understand the deep need of the time. He cannot get down under the trouble of the generations. Niagara from above and Niagara from the Cave of the Winds are different. Look at the cataract from above and tremble; look at it from beneath, hear its incessant roar, and feel under your feet the everlasting rock. Look at the doubt of the times from above only, and you will be full of alarm; through the heroism of your own soul go down below it, and, while your feet stand upon God, listen to the tumult and the thunder, and you will cry: "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." The true teacher of youth to-day is the man who has been in an abyss below theirs, and who has found under the cataract of doubt and despair the eternal ground of hope.

2. The second stage in the day's experience

was the walk and the human relief. How natural that is! These disciples pull themselves together, as we say, and start for Emmaus. The exercise sets their thoughts free; the influence of nature breaks mildly in upon them; past associations open up the fountains of their mind; a strange human love and tenderness toward each other comes into their hearts. They talk, and the relief thereupon begins. Full, rich, tender, confiding, and communicative humanity is a solace to humanity.

Much of the talk of the suffering world is of this description. It has no earthly value in itself; it is good only as an escape for pain. The talk of those two disciples was foolish, and the Lord did put a stop to it eventually, but he allowed it to run on. He knew that it was a temporary necessity. The mind of man is sometimes like a reservoir: you must get out the flood of folly before you can occupy it with wisdom. There is something divinely wise and patient in the delay of Christ. He did not join those disciples too soon. He allowed them to have their talk out. Exhaustion is sometimes the only condition of receptivity.

In every generation the young are new to the ageless problems of the mind. Their hearts are new to the ancient sorrow of the world. Debate has great fascination for brilliant youth. Debate

of all things in earth and in heaven is a kind of apostolical succession for gifted minds in each new generation. These youthful discussions have little or no value in themselves. They are ways of escape for the undisciplined and unmatured power within. Let these debates over belief and unbelief, optimism and pessimism, free will and necessity, the hopes of immortality and the fears that would quench all hope, go on. These escapes for serious power are indispensable; thus is prepared the way of the Lord.

In the bond of friendship, in the confidence of home, in the freedom of congenial society, talking is a great blessing. The hurt that one receives in the hard struggle of life is thereby, in a measure, healed, the pain of disappointment is lessened, the blows of adversity are for the moment disregarded, and the wounds of sorrow are done up in the oil and wine of tender human sympathy. Carlyle's doctrine of silence is true, but it is not the whole truth. Frequently the best way to get rid of a foolish mood is to let it expend its force in talk. When a group of persons have talked for hours over the situation of human life, with all the enthusiasm of youth and all the confidence of inexperience, the mass of talk, as it rolls into view a huge cloud of crudeness and irrelevancy, is apt to induce readiness to listen to a wiser voice.

The method of Socrates was to get young men to talking. Many of them came to him sure that they understood all about holiness, courage, temperance, friendship, knowledge, and justice. He made them utter themselves, and if he did not make them wiser, he did draw much of the folly out of them. In the Gospels one is often amazed at the foolish sayings of the disciples, and one wonders how these things came to be recorded. It was part of the method of Jesus to make men talk. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" The gossip of the multitude had for Jesus a human interest, inasmuch as he came to make men wise.

In this way we are to look at much that calls itself literature. It is neither deep, nor strong, nor wise. It is in no way a masterful or even a useful dealing with the great tragic situations of human life. Human suffering and loss lie far away from these poor interpretations. Were it not for kindly intention, or the absence of unkind intention, these poor writings would be a kind of blasphemy against the majesty of human pain. "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to-day?" "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." These utterances are currents of weakness, and folly. Let them flow. They may help to drain the bog.

In writings upon religion the same fact must be noted. There are the men who deal only in the changes in theology, in the loss of authority in the Bible, in the unfavorable attitude of the people toward the church. Whole libraries of books are devoted to that in Christian faith which never was important except to men in their folly. These writers wander in negation, settle down in the heart of the transient, cultivate the friendship of the perishable in the great faith of the world, become melancholy over the loss in the situation, speak only of the dead Christ in Jerusalem. Religion has its perpetual tragedy, — its questions about God, his character, his government of the world; its profound solicitudes for man in his battle with evil and death. And oh, the foolish tongues that add to the great tragic mystery their painful Babel! The literature that they create is doubtless to be looked upon with patience and benignity. It is one of the ways that the poor world has for lessening its grief, for getting clear of its folly, for preparing the way of the Lord.

3. The mysterious companion and his interpretation of the tragic event is the next aspect of the day. The disciples had talked themselves out. They were ready to hear another voice upon the subject, and that voice seemed at once to master them and their theme. Slowly the

movement of history prior to Christ seemed to shape itself for culmination in his cross; slowly the significance of Moses and all the prophets appeared to be in their love and sacrifice; slowly it began to dawn upon them that a suffering Messiah was the answer to the best hope of Israel, that a sacrificial Christ was the goal of the best teaching and of the best character of the past, and the divine hope for their race and for mankind. They received this thought because they could not help it. It seemed so full, so adequate, so divine, that they could not resist it. And the strength, the confidence, the beauty of the speaker carried them away.

Under the supreme believing minds of the race, under the sovereign teacher, Christ, under the living disciples who mediate his wisdom and grace, belief comes in this way. The situation of human existence and the universe is looked at through other eyes than our own; we hear the great believers speak; we listen to the monumental witnesses for the things of the spirit; we ponder as their interpretation is put before us. And we receive it at last because we cannot help it; that view of man and man's history and man's universe seems to be the truth. It comes to seem wiser, deeper, more adequate, nearer the heart of things, than all unbelief or doubt. When the spring is here, the dead grass disappears one

knows not how; it really goes because the multitudinous spears of living green are resistlessly pushing it out of the way. Life takes the place of death, and the forlorn earth is once more in the bloom of the year. In that way the old unbelief goes; in that way the new faith comes. The mind that had spoken its own speculation until it got wearied is somehow hospitable to the thought of the highest. And when to that mood that thought is spoken, it wins its way like the Son of God.

Personality somehow gathers about the great positive thought of the world. Faith centres in sublime personalities. Isaiah and Paul still teach the world, and soul speaks to soul. In the same way Christ is inseparable from his teaching. We listen to him as we read the Sermon on the Mount; we hear him as we study his parables; the Lord's Prayer still carries in it his accents; the entire sum of his teaching, the whole volume of his ministry, is a word spoken by him on the journey of life; and the gracious and sublime presence is somehow deeper than all thought, stronger than all argument, and still carries the candid and earnest spirit away. When the best in the soul, in the church, in human history, in the universe comes to one with the persuasion of the voice of Christ and the power of his hallowed presence, a wondrous step has been taken into

faith, a great event has occurred in the journey of existence.

4. The full and mighty response of the heart was unnoted at the time, but the disciples returned to it afterwards. They could not do otherwise, for the way in which Christ sounded and satisfied their whole being was a supreme witness to his truth.

If a musical instrument could speak, whom would it claim as master? Would it not judge by its own nature, would it not go by the witness of its heart? The persons who merely make a noise upon it, or who set one register of power in it at painful variance with another, or who call only for what is weakest in its character, the great organ would brand as impostors. But the person whose touch from first to last liberates melody, whose knowledge and skill explore and bring into play the whole compass of its varied and wonderful nature, whose purpose and piece are suited to the entire fullness of its capacity, who gives it an existence of order, harmony, power, and joy, and who makes it support and blend with the chorus of human voices, — the mighty instrument would crown him master. The same experience leads to the confession of Christ as Lord. What he does for his disciples who walk with him, and who listen to his interpretation, and who yield themselves to his spirit,

is the final reason for their faith in him. He plays upon life as no one else does. His touch is divine. He draws out the great incentives of the intellect, he sets free the vast, melodious feelings of the heart, he brings into action the sublime forces of the will, — patience, fortitude, faithfulness. He makes the soul of his true disciple sing for joy. For those who live closest to him life becomes a chant. The great notes of trial, disappointment, disillusionment, sorrow, and despair are rolled up into the mightier combinations of courage, achievement, wisdom, love, faith, joy, and they become but the sweet soul of pathos in the triumphant song of Christian experience. The person whose heart burns under the power of Christ has the best of reasons for calling him Lord.

The trouble with us all is that we know well only the forces that are not divine. The hands that have played upon us to our hurt, we know. The promises which the various aspects of the world have made to our devotion and which have not been kept, we understand. We have found many impostors, because we have allowed the wrong things to appeal to us. The invitation of a score of various pretenders we have accepted to our sorrow, the invitation of Christ we have not put to the proof. We have found out what is not good, what does not satisfy, what fails to

make the heart burn with a divine fire. We have walked with selfish pleasures, selfish ambitions, social dreams, business schemes, scientific aims, artistic purposes, finite ends; and we have missed the zest upon which we had set our hearts. We have wasted our supreme devotion. It remains to seek the Lord with our whole strength, to make our religion central and governing, to give our Master an opportunity to awaken in us the witness of the burning heart.

5. The last thing in that great day was Christ standing in the peace and glow of the evening. Here is the climax of the day at its close. All doubts, all fears, all sorrows had lifted, and rolled away; all hopes and surmises and dreams had come to their fulfillment; the best of the day was the last. The Christ who had been absent in the morning, who had been unseen but strongly felt during the progress of the hours, stood in the sunset, framed in by its farewell fires and more glorious than they. The evening with Christ in it, the risen Christ about to reveal himself fully to his disciples, is the supreme felicity of one of the happiest of days.

May we not hope for this in our life? May we not expect the morning heaviness to depart? May we not anticipate something better than the walk and the relief that comes from the mere expression of sorrow? May we not look for the

divine companion on the journey and his burning power upon the heart? Shall manhood not come to this? Shall it not rise into fellowship with the best that meets it, the mysterious highest that joins it on the way? And when it is toward evening, shall we not look for something higher still?

How easily we shall let the world go, if we possess something infinitely worthier than it! How easy it was for those disciples to shut out the world when they were shutting in Christ! It is always easy to surrender the less for the greater; the weakness of childhood for the power of youth, the immaturity of youth for the disciplined strength of manhood, the unseeing eyes of manhood for the vision that in the evening is full of the glorious Christ. Christ kept back from these disciples his best to the last. If we walk with him, if we listen to him, if we give up our nature to him, if we constrain him when it is toward evening to come in and abide with us, we shall see him at his best when our day is at its close.

The way from Jerusalem to Emmaus is still there. Those eight miles from city to village have more of high and tender humanity in them than any similar distance on the face of the earth. That path winding among the Judean hills is alive with the pathos of man's loss, with

the beauty and peace of man's hope. It may well serve as a symbol for the journey of life, from the mystery of birth to the mystery of death, from the crowded city of life to the solitary abode at life's end. And as the risen Christ glorified that walk from city to village, as his presence filled it with unfading beauty, so it may be with our journey. He will join us somewhere on the way. He will go with us to the journey's end. He will make himself known to us at the last. He will change our whole view of our human world. He will show us that it belongs to him.

Many sad tales are told in these days about life's end. Eminent servants of the body tell us there are no ecstasies in death. That is hardly true. Even so, there is something better than ecstasy. There is light in the soul, peace below the reach of pain, a voice that can be heard in the tumult, a sense of his presence who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Death should be a sunset with Christ in it. The sun goes, but wherever he goes it is day. He blazes a path for himself through the forest of night. Darkness rests only upon the world that he has left. So the disciple of Christ may go. The Lord is his light and his salvation. The gloom of Christian death is confined to this

earth; it is for those who remain behind. The ongoing soul has a different fate. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

XIX

SOME CONTINUITIES OF INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE

"And through it he being dead yet speaketh."
Hebrews xi, 4.

THE question of the duration of the individual human existence is one of great and grave concern. The question is of great concern because on the whole life is good, and still further, because life is involved with love. The desire to go on is nearly universal, and almost every life is dear to some other life. The question is of grave concern because death confronts every man. The deepest conflict known to man is that between life and time, love and death. Life has no wish to come to its limit, to arrive at its goal, to attend the end and cease to be. Life and death are in absolute antagonism. They are inevitable, irreconcilable enemies, and love sides with life against death. Life and love stand together, supporting the same great cause. We see them this morning, fair, full of joy and yet touched with fear, raising the question that man has pondered since the world began: If a man die, shall he live again?

That the duration of individual existence is not arrested by the fact of physical death is the plain teaching of this story about Abel. According to the belief of this writer, his hero had been dead several thousands of years; and yet he was cited as a witness for true sacrifice against false. Although forty centuries had passed since he lived, he had continued in the earth a speaker for the Highest. His existence on the earth was brief; his death was a tragedy; but his life did not end at the grave. It continued a potent influence down to the time of Christ; it has continued a good influence from that day to this. The text calls attention to this survival of life's power when life in this world has run its course; it brings out the fact that the duration of individual existence, in one form or another, transcends the grave, and lasts on into future ages. It therefore fitly presents to our thought this morning the subject, Some Continuities of Individual Existence.

1. There is first of all racial continuity. Parents live in their children, they continue to live in their descendants. They do not cease to live while any drop of their blood flows in the veins or builds the tissue of any living man or woman. If Abel had left children, if his children had given to the world other children, if the line of descent had gone on without break to our

time, then it could have been said that in one sense this great ancestor was still alive. This is the secret of much of the charm and vitality of the story of Adam and Eve. They are the fountain of the race; they live forever in the endless organic existence of the race. Their blood is renewed in every generation; and they are potent for weal or for woe in the continuous stream of man's being.

Does this sort of continuous existence mean anything? Is it capable of entering into the mind as serious fact and governing consideration? Is man so made that the thought of the perpetuation of his physical being in the physical being of an endless line of descendants may operate as motive? No noble man can doubt it. This elemental form of immortality is of the most serious concern. If a life-saver on this stormy coast could believe that forever his heroism as a life-saver would continue to repeat itself to the end of time, that it would continue to rescue countless thousands from the terrors of an angry sea, would it not operate upon his spirit as motive? If some train-wrecker could believe that his train-wrecking crimes would perpetuate themselves to the world's end, if he could see the millions of mutilated bodies rolled together as the issue of his wickedness and hear other millions weeping over the bereavement

that he had caused, would it not do something toward arresting him in his mad career?

Precisely analogous is the case of descent. There is nothing more appalling to an awakened mind than the idea of the perpetuation of individual wickedness in the organic tendencies of descendants. To be wicked is to do all that one can to make one's children curse the day in which they were born, and to curse the father or mother who thus ruthlessly smote them with pestilential misery. Youthful honor starts back in the presence of iniquity, at the thought not only of the disgrace that the wrong deed may bring to the person doing it, but also and yet more at the thought of the shame and suffering it may bring to those unborn. Parental love is here face to face with the deepest fact in existence. No fondling of your child, no education, no advantages, no wealth or position, can altogether undo the organic injury of an unhallowed parenthood. Here the disaster is in the seat of life. You can mitigate it, but you cannot remove it. And on the other hand, is there any wish of the human heart nobler than that which seeks to provide for children clean blood, organic health, native honor, sweet humanity, a physical existence full of harmony, with endless music locked up in every fibre of it?

Here again the Adam and Eve story is vital.

The disgrace of the parent becomes the calamity of the child, and the foreseen calamity of the child should avert the disgrace of the parent. How many, under the old-fashioned belief, have hated Adam and Eve for the woe that they wrought upon their descendants; and now that we no longer live under that order of belief, we still see what woe and what glory parents may work out for their children and their children's children to the latest generation.

This, it is said, is a trivial kind of immortality. It is not so. It is a momentous kind of immortality. If there were no other immortality, here is something intrinsically great and moving. Blood is the basis of life, good blood of good life, rich and rare blood of rich and rare life. The stream of blood is continuous from parent to child to the end of the line of descent. Shall it be a river of God, or a stream of ink? Shall it be cleansed as it passes through you, or still further polluted? Shall you serve as filter or as sewer to the vital current? Shall you bless or curse your kind, live as angel or devil, as saviour or blaster, in the future life of your race? Shall you hang millstones about the neck of your children, or give them wings to fly in the world of truth and love? If this is not a noble immortality, there is none, and if this is not motive, again motive does not exist.

2. There is continuity of individual existence through literary record and achievement. Great men live in the historic record of their greatness; other great men live on account of their literary achievement. Perhaps there should be included the class who live in great monuments and those who live because they designed and executed these monuments. Monumental fame, whether in art, science, philosophy, political activity, historic record, or religious worth, may serve as a generic phrase to cover those who have achieved greatness and those who have become great by the fitting commemoration of greatness.

In the narrower sense of monumental fame, how few of the countless multitudes of our race are chosen for this honor. Ten poets there may be who are sure of immortality. Perhaps there may be an equal number of philosophers, artists, scientific pioneers, orators, historians, rulers, and supreme religious leaders whose name and fame will endure to the end of time. To any sane view of history the number of these elect spirits is small. The stars are many, but the vacant spaces as one looks up into the infinite night reduce the multitudinous stars to insignificance. The stars are many, but how few of them are visible to the naked eye and visible everywhere. Limited in number, mostly local in power, seldom of universal significance, — such is the fact about

the shining contents of space, such is the fact about the glorious and abiding names in human history.

There is, however, a vastly larger view of the subject than this. Monuments are for humanity. The hero is the representative of humanity. The individuals of the generation in which the hero lived and achieved live in the monument that perpetuates the memory of his greatness. The Pyramids tell not only of the heroic kings of Egypt, but also of the heroic race that lived and achieved under them. The great music of the world uplifts into life and power not only the soul of the dead master, but also the countless souls among whom he lived and from whom he drew his interest in existence, and whose sorrow and hope became the vast minor and major of his mightiest harmonies. The historian is at his best when he writes of the people. In the pages of Thucydides, the Greek race fights, suffers, and goes down; in Tacitus, races live, taste the sweets of victory, and drink the bitterness of defeat. In Carlyle, hero-worshiper that he is, the French people rise and light the fire that consumes a thousand years of misdeeds and crimes. In Green, the English race displays its strong and hopeful existence. In all the greater works of man, the ultimate voice that one hears is the voice of the people. If we listen to Cromwell,

we hear the stern notes of outraged English manhood; if we listen to Washington, we catch the firm tones of the American colonist; if we listen to Lincoln, the voice of the American people is again ringing in our ears. You cannot forget the people, the nation, the humanity, that the great man represents. The great thing about the earthly immortality of Jesus Christ is that one hears in his voice the articulate conscience of a purified humanity. When we remember him, we remember the race for whom he stands. When we pay our homage to his person, we offer veneration to the manhood of the world.

The best example of this universal blending of the hero and those whom the hero served, one finds in the anonymous in literature. Who wrote the Psalms? No one knows, no one will ever know. They are monumental utterances of the religious soul of the nameless writer and his nameless contemporaries. They are, I sometimes think, a better introduction to the deep and beautiful heart of those early centuries because they are nameless. They are no longer a merely individual monument; they have general, racial, universal significance. The beholding eye, the rapt soul, the suffering and singing heart of a whole people live in those incomparable lyrics; the countless individuals of that age, as at least capable of rising to this height, live in them.

There is the Book of Job. Who wrote it no man can tell. No man will ever be able to tell. It represents indeed the fortunes, the epic, of an individual soul; and at the same time it utters the epic significance of a suffering and achieving humanity. It is as good for the modern world as it was for the ancient. It is a monumental book, perpetuating the meaning and the power of the unnumbered lives of a vanished world, taking up into itself the fleeting generations of never-resting time, giving continuity to their brief existence through its own endless and ageless utterance of the deepest and the highest in man and in the fortunes of man's race.

I am inclined to think that this capacity of the Bible to take up into itself the meaning of the swift-coming and swift-vanishing generations of men is its supreme capacity. Who wrote the various books of the Bible is a fair and an interesting question. A thousand other questions concerning its origin, contemporary significance, and limitations are interesting. But the supreme question concerns its fitness to serve as the monumental inspiration of the religious life and the monumental witness of the religious heart. In this book are the prophets, the psalmists, the apostles, and the Master; in this book are the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman races, the Latin, the Teuton, the Anglo-Saxon, and the

American peoples at their best. In it will be gathered and perpetuated the best life of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the islands of the sea; it is destined to become the one supreme literary monument of a spiritual humanity.

Does this kind of continued existence mean anything? What thoughtful man would say that it does not? Does the shaft on Bunker Hill take on no additional meaning from the fact that it represents a nation in arms? Is the Declaration of Independence a monument only to the political genius of Jefferson? Does it not mean infinitely more because in it we can hear the eloquent manhood of the American people? Is the Constitution simply a device of Hamilton, Madison, and other wise leaders, or the organ of a race of freemen? Is our history the record of the achievements and triumphs of solitary genius only, or at the same time a record of a social achievement and triumph? And does it not mean infinitely more to us to look upon the supreme monuments of the race as standing for the best life of the race? These monuments gained their power over us from their racial significance. When we look at them, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. The dead, the countless dead, live again, and cheer us on at the high and serious task of existence. And if monuments gain their power in this way, if they become great

only as they continue the race in living influence, surely there is here inspiration for heroic character. We can help to make Washington stand for a nobler America. We can do something to enable Lincoln to rule over a greater America. We can do something to add to the significance of every great monument in the land, every great monument in the world. We can do something to increase the mass and the worth of that for which the great poem, the great history, the great oration, the great philosophy, the great religion speaks and sings. We can do something toward the enrichment and splendor of that ideal kingdom for which Christ stands. Thus, when we shall have ended life and gone the way of all preceding generations, we shall continue to be in the greatened monumental records, achievements, ideals, and hopes of mankind; we shall live continuously in the living and growing power by which humanity is interpreted, inspired, and carried toward its goal.

3. There is, inside this continuity of individual existence through monumental forms, the continuity that the individual obtains through institutions. Here the family comes again into our thought, and in a new way. It is the oldest institution in the world. In it the memory of individuals is longer preserved than in any other institution; in it the character of individuals

operates for good or for evil in a unique manner. The memory of those who died in childhood, before they acquired any distinct recognition beyond family connections, is lovingly cherished; the memory of infants who came into this sphere of mystery for a few brief days, or even hours, continues part of the treasure and sorrow of family life. Who has not heard a deep-hearted mother whisper to friendly ears the story of her dead children, and who has not observed that in such a mother the whisper became more reverential and tender with the lapse of time? The dead infant that never saw the light, the dead child, continues in the mind and heart of the noble mother while life lasts. Carlyle at fourscore years of age, writing to console a niece on the death of her child, recalls his mother's sorrow more than sixty years before over a similar calamity. Thus in the third generation the memory wrought with tender power.

The business of the world is another institution. Great men are remembered here, and when they are no longer remembered, their business achievement and spirit continue. The organized business of this city has in it the ability and fidelity of a million noble men; it rests upon the insight and power of the past; it is the monument to the achievement of the past, and in it in some measure the existence of those vanished

thousands of leading men is perpetuated. Every vocation was organized by some man, some Tubal Cain started the new form of social service. Every vocation is developed and perfected by the ability and fidelity of the successive generations that pursue it. Farming, mining, shipbuilding, navigation, all forms of production, exchange, and transportation, carry in them the power and character of the worthy who served man in this manner. The maxim that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church is of universal application. The color of the rose is drawn out of the earth and out of the sun, out of the invisible and infinite, and in the same way the bloom of the world's enterprise carries in it the character and tone of the world's great workmen.

The school and college are other institutions that perpetuate the lives of individuals. Schools like Rugby and Eton and Harrow do more than tell of the great men who studied or taught there. Arnold, the great master of Rugby, stands for a multitude. Stanley, the beautiful disciple, suggests another multitude of invisible but perpetuated lives. Eton recalls not only Wellington and Gladstone, the great soldier and the great statesman, but many centuries of aspiring boyhood. John Morley tells in his life of Gladstone of the ovation given to Dr. Keate, an old

and severe master of Eton. The responses to the toast to the Queen and to the Queen Dowager vanished into insignificance before the cheering given to this old master. He rose among many hundreds of eminent men whom as boys he had taught and flogged. So overwhelmed was he by the universal outburst of reverence and affection that he could not speak. The rough old schoolmaster stood there a king, representing a kingdom of vanished life. In his severity he has stimulated humor for a century. "Write down Hamilton to be flogged for breaking my window," said the master. "Sir, I did not break your window," cried Hamilton. "Write down Hamilton to be flogged for breaking my window and for lying," shouted the master. "Upon my soul, sir, I did not break your window," protested Hamilton. "Write him down to be flogged for breaking my window, for lying, and for swearing," concluded the master. So the generations of schoolboys live in the strength and roughness and devotion of great teachers.

We have near us a college great by the presence in it of nearly three centuries of noble graduates. While it stands it will conserve the lives of its worthy sons, doing its work by the strength of the living and the dead. Part of the power of Harvard College is in its associations. The Puritan has left upon it his inef-

faceable mark. The colonist, the revolutionist, the daring patriot in the war for the preservation of the Union, each has dyed its name in the fair and brilliant colors of his own devotion. The great succession of educated, gifted, and high-minded youth has hallowed the college yard, the trees, the old buildings, and charged Alma Mater with the sacred strength of unnumbered lives. Great men appear in her history like distinct, familiar stars; but the light in the firmament in which these stars move is not all from them. Thousands and tens of thousands of invisible shining lives are there as points of light; they are known by no special sign, they exist in the general illumination and peace which they help to maintain.

Political institutions are another form of perpetuation. History in a living nation and for a living people is power. Japan is to-day doing battle by the virtue of the living and by the strength of the dead. Her national life has conserved the noble devotion of an immemorial succession of brave and patriotic men. In this American republic we look for the same kind of continuity. The republic will never be too great to remember the founders and their generation, the redeemers and their militant hosts; it will never be too great to recall the successive generations of its lovers and servants. The old

flag will grow more and more precious and moving the older it becomes. When the dear burning love of sixty generations of boys and girls is seen in its crimson bars, when the pure sweet wisdom of sixty generations of the aged and venerable is beheld in its silver stars, and when in its field of blue the loyalty is felt of a multitude that no man can number, the power of the flag will be a still vaster delight, and the nation whose majestic ensign it is will be greater because of the presence in its memory and heart of an unseen and countless host.

The supreme institution is the Christian Church. What a perpetuater it has been! The precious literatures of the Hebrew and the Greek races have been preserved and handed down by the Church. Great men, the succession of great men, great races, and their work have been conserved to the modern world through the mediation of the Church. We owe immortal thanks to this institution, not only for the kingdom of love for which it stands, but also for bringing down to our time the lost treasure of ancient races overwhelmed in calamity.

The Church is an institution with the sublimest vision. It observes All Saints' day; it observes All Souls' day. All the human beings that have breathed this atmosphere of ours in any century of time, in any zone of our globe,

are annually recalled in its prayer. Their names are forgotten; all distinct trace of them has vanished; but the effect of their life is still in the world, and this consciousness of the continuity of their being in the life of their race is thus seriously confessed. I rejoice in All Saints' day. It does me good to recall the great and the good who wrought mightily for our humanity, who rose through the purgatorial fires of time into spotless character and benign love. I rejoice in All Saints' day, but I rejoice still more in All Souls' day. I think then of all the children that have seen the light, of all the human beings that have ever lived, of their sin, sorrow, love, despair, and death, and I can see this cloud of humanity, vast, dark, terrible, yet shot through, here and there transfigured, its wild and broken circumference edged with the gold of unforgotten and unforgettable service to posterity, and by posterity's pity, gratitude, and hope. The one humanity is to me, I confess, a sublime vision, the whole might of the past living in the life of to-day, and for this one humanity the Church is the great witness.

What is there here to greaten our hearts? Much, I believe. Institutions conserve and perpetuate what is best in human life; they prolong indefinitely the influence of good men and women. We have in our own church an impress-

ive example. We worship every Sunday with seven generations of the members of this church and congregation. The building is alive with the dear humanity of the past. The dead speak with a voice deeper, more tender, and mightier far than any living voice. The hush of their finished career is upon us, the awe of the unseen in which they are gathered rests upon us. The stone cries out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber, the character and spirit of our entire past is active and potent upon us to-day. Oh, that we might live to increase this holy spell, to add to this majestic influence, to greaten the church when we are no longer visible here! Oh, that we might so live as to become worthy to be numbered among those whose spirit shapes, and will forever shape, the best life here! Oh, that we might so live that in this Church of Christ we shall find our silent, beautiful, monumental witness!

4. These continuities of individual existence lead up to the question of personal continuity. The human spirit is able to lay hold of other lives, make them the bearers of its meaning, and carry down the stream of time its power. When the soul can no longer go on here, it is able to deposit its energy in the living world, and thus continue its influence in the earth. All this is fact, clear, certain, undeniable. These continuities of which I have spoken as matters of fact

raise the great question of faith, the capacity and likelihood of the individual soul to live after death in the unseen.

Something has already been said in favor of personal continuity in the great facts to which I have called attention. If it is true that in the few brief years of his earthly career an Abel can speak forever in behalf of the Highest, that he can forever ennoble the blood of the race, add to the depth and pathos of its literary monuments, increase the volume of meaning and spirit in its institutions, it would seem that in such a being we are dealing with an amazing and a priceless value. If God is moving mankind out of the depths of brutal life up and on toward the heights of spiritual being, it would seem that those who help Him, who enter into this world-process as servants of God, must be dear to Him. When men seek noble ends over long distances of time and against adverse forces, those who come to their aid and who stand by them become permanently dear to them. If a captain is battling with hurricanes and high seas, and if some expert navigator among the passengers comes to his aid when his staff of officers is exhausted, and helps him to bring his ship safely into port, we expect that captain to love that helper forever. If a son or daughter is in grave moral peril, and if a minister speaks a word,

or shows a kindness, or exerts an influence that saves to faith and honor that son or daughter, do you think noble parents can ever cease to remember and love the helper? Is not this the way of humanity? The domestic that serves you in faithfulness, the merchant that has always done fairly by you, the engineer that has for years taken you to and from the city in safety, the family physician whose devotion is beyond praise, who has been with you in the great crises of family life, the writer of the noble book, the teacher of your mind who is at the same time the friend of your heart, — all become dear to you. The greater you are in character, the closer you hold to your grateful heart the servants of your life. And shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Shall we read the character of the Eternal in the wild and devouring sea, or through the appreciations, thanksgivings, friendships, and dear loves of the human heart?

In so far as the Infinite has great ends, they must be dear to him who serves those ends. In so far as the universe has meaning, to that extent it is seeking the realization of great ends. In its mighty movement upon its exalted ends, some things must be precious to it. And can there be anything so precious as the enlightened sympathy, efficient devotion, and suffering

love of good men? If Abel can forever speak for the cause of God, then if God is as good as good men, He will not allow this faithful speaker to die. If pure and loving hearts are essential to God in the lifting of society into higher moods and conditions, God will not pay them with death and the grave, with the life of a worm or a fly, but with an endless opportunity to love and serve Him. If one may believe in the humanity of God, one must believe in the immortality of the servants of God's humanity. The hero, the saint, the prophet, the humble witness for righteousness everywhere, must be a priceless value to the God of honor and love. The worth of good men to men leads to this conclusion: the priceless and endless worth of good men to God. The first premise of faith in personal continuity after death is the heart of the Eternal. It is a heart of honor; and therefore life's worth is guarded by God's honor.

But most men are not good. What shall we say about them? There is the wheat, and there is the chaff. What shall we say about the chaff? God winnows humanity as the farmer winnows his grain. If we say the good are dear to Him, must we not say that the bad are the reverse of dear?

Again we return for an answer to our humanity. God made the human heart at its best, and

He must be as good as the best that He has made. If a mother cannot surrender a mistaken child, if she still holds to it through good report and evil report, if she follows it with prayers and tears and strong cryings unto God when she can serve it in no other way, if, when her last breath is leaving the poor body worn down to death with sorrow for this faithless child, that last breath is a remembrance of the dear sweet eyes of its infanthood, the clear and high instincts of its early years, the undeniable capacity for goodness that has never been lost, that cannot be lost, and a solemn appeal, "Father, into thy hands I commend the soul of my erring child," — do you think that God will do less? Perhaps no soul is or ever can become chaff. Perhaps the chaff is the evil in the good and in the bad. Perhaps the task of God's fan is to get the chaff out of the wheat, and to get the wheat out of the chaff, to winnow the wickedness out of the good, and to recover the goodness that lives in the bad. Perhaps capacity counts with God as a priceless value. You see a diamond flashing in the crown of a king. That is beautiful; that is nearly priceless. You see a diamond new from the mine, fastened in the rock which was dug up with it, covered with the mire in which it was found, shapeless, unsightly, apparently dead. The expert knows that the stuff is there. Cut

it out, put it on the wheel. Turn the capacity to character. In that dull, dead stone there is the capacity to flash and shine like the jewel in the crown of the king. That capacity makes it precious. You will not throw it away, you will save it because of the splendor that it may become. So God must regard the multitudes to whom the name of good cannot be applied. They are here with the rock of brutality adhering to them and with the mire of animalism staining their whole existence, they look no better than the beast of the field, and they act in many instances far worse. But they have the capacity to become men, men of honor, devotion, heroism, love. And that capacity must restrain God from allowing them to perish.

It need not be for them at first a desirable continuity. Here we come to the great idea of retribution. Cain must live and suffer to atone for his crime. The universe is not done with him when he has sinned against it. The universe is not done with a bad man at death. He must face God, law, justice, the fearful reality of a just order; he must live and suffer, and settle his account with the Eternal. Between the beginning and the end of a sinful will there is plenty of room for a retribution more terrible than even the imagination of a Dante can paint.

We sometimes marvel at the strength of the

Puritan's belief in the reality of the life after death. His confidence in it is so amazing to us in our hesitation and doubt about it. His sense of its reality, its overwhelming reality, is scarcely intelligible to us in our vagueness and uncertainty. We wonder how he could talk so long, and with such sustained and solemn interest, about heaven and hell, how he could bring those pictures of the future to bear upon the details of his earthly life. What was the secret of it? Belief in God. He lived in the most solemn certainty of God's presence in this universe, of God's searching presence in every human conscience, and of his infinite claim upon every human soul. He lived in the awful consciousness of the living God. The truth and falsehood of his thoughts, the right and wrong of his conscience, the love and the hate of his heart, the nobility and the baseness of his life concerned God. His existence concerned God above all and beyond all; and what thus stood of infinite moment in the esteem of God he saw could not die. He might rejoice in heaven forever; he might suffer in hell forever; but whether for good or for evil, for weal or for woe, live he must, perish at death he cannot. To me, this is the sovereign lesson of Puritan faith. It is this that gives to the Puritan immortal distinction. He took his life from God. He held it in

God's light, he read its meaning by its concern for God, and stood by the issues of his great faith.

There can be no real belief in personal continuity apart from belief in God. The secret of faith in man's worth is in the higher faith in God's humanity. Those who see God, who read his character through the best that He has made, who dwell with God, speak to Him, serve Him, love Him, form the habit of the intellect in the sense of his supreme reality, and who stand in the awe of a sovereign accountability to Him, will not find it hard to believe in the life everlasting. They see that men are born for God, that they are born for life in terms of the Eternal conscience, that they must live and mount by the serene path of joy or by the fiery discipline of woe, till they become the conscious, perfected sons of God, continuous and endless servants in his continuous and endless kingdom of love. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Within the compass of that kingdom all men live. They are there the subjects of the divine conscience and heart; they are there under the inspiration of just praise and under the discipline of just pain; they are there that they may rise into the endless joy of perpetual and perfect service.

XX

GOD ALL IN ALL

"That God may be all in all."
1 *Corinthians*, xv, 28.

All great religion is a kind of tidal interest in God, an unreturning, endless Godward sweep of the soul. The character of the soul in death, in Tennyson's great lyric, is the character of the soul in all profound religious experience: —

"When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home."

The sea departs from itself in the incoming tide; it returns to itself in the tide that goes seaward. The animal, the sensuous, the merely temporal life carries man away from his true self, away from home. When man considers, when he comes to himself, his first great resolve is, "I will arise and go to my Father." And the greater a man's religious experience becomes, the vaster is his interest in the Eternal, the mightier is the return of his whole being to God. Return unto thy rest, O my soul. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Thou hast made us for thyself, and we cannot rest till we rest in thee. Listen to the song of the river. It is now the

song of the mountain torrent, again it is the lyric of the collected and chastened stream, still again it is the subdued music of the greater volume and the steadier current, once more it is the peace and hope with which it meets the mighty sea. From first to last, through all its notes, the song is of the river that longs for the sea. Such is the religious soul. It begins, it continues, and it ends in the great sigh, "When shall I come and appear before God?" Religion is the sense of God in life, the quest for more and more of God, the increasing current of life Godward, the final rescue of existence from its own littleness, its rush into the tides of the Infinite, who takes it forth into the boundlessness and peace of his own being.

There is something very impressive in the solemn interest with which all the greater thinkers of the race regard the Infinite. Plato is nowhere so great as when he is struggling to express his vision of the Eternal goodness at the heart of the universe. As the great sun is to the whole visible world the source of light and life and joy, so is the Eternal soul of goodness to the whole invisible realm. It is maker, sustainer, perfecter. It is the light and life and joy of the eternal sphere. It is God in his boundless benignity and power sending forth the eternal tides of his blessed life upon all the orders of being

in his abiding world. Even more impressive, when one considers the sober and unimaginative cast of his intellect, is the quiet and free delight into which Aristotle rises, at the close of his ethics and elsewhere, as he faces the sovereign life and joy of the Eternal mind. There is then in his cold speech a glow as of the morning, a touch of the fire and splendor of the evening. The beatitude that lures him onward is the hope of the supreme moment when man may share God's vision of his world. Spinoza continues this tradition and strengthens it. He has been called, what every great religious soul must ever be, a God-intoxicated man. And it is still possible to worship with Spinoza, so sovereign is his conception of God, and so great and pure his love for the Eternal. Even Kant, who is so shy in the presence of the Infinite, so critical of every scheme of thought that professes to conduct man thither, so agnostic in dealing with the world of the intellect, when he comes to the human conscience breaks forth into song. Here is something that will not be confined, that takes the philosopher beyond all boundaries, past all finitude, into the moral being of God. In Hegel, as in Edwards, God is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. So it is with the entire succession of the greater thinkers of our race. Either at the beginning of their thinking or at

the end they are fascinated, carried away by the vision of the Eternal. And this great tradition of the loftiest intellect of the world is another witness to the fact that in Him we live and move and have our being. The mystic and the philosopher come at last to the same confession: I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

In the great words, "that God may be all in all," the Apostle sets forth his aim and hope for himself, for all like himself, and for all rational beings in all worlds, and at the same time he utters the deepest thought of his intellect. In the text Paul is both saint and philosopher. His heart's desire is that God may be all in all in his own soul, that he may be all in all in the souls of all men, that he may be all in all in the whole rational universe. A vaster or higher aspiration there could not be. It is the vision of all sin, wrong, error, infirmity, woe, forever lifted and banished from the universe. It is the vision of the love that is Infinite and Eternal passing through all spiritual life in the strength and sweetness of its own tides, cleansing all hearts, keeping all souls, lifting all into perfect obedience and perfect peace. The Apostle longs for one eternal day, light everywhere, light without darkness or cloud or shadow, light over all and in all; a universe dwelling in the light Eternal. This is Paul the saint. This is the longing of

his soul that God, the Eternal Lover of all souls, may be all in all.

Paul the philosopher keeps company with Paul the saint. There is a hierarchy of beings. There are the bare worlds; there are the various forms of life in these worlds; there are the uncounted multitudes of human souls; there is the one Lord of all human souls, putting all evil under his feet, subduing all the wild forces in the race that he came to save, reigning till the kingdom of love is forever sure, and then gathering up his kingdom in himself, delivering all for the whole eternal future into the dear and boundless life of God. Thus in a few words, from a profound and teeming mind, Paul indicates his thought concerning the fate of man, the fate of the kingdom of God in time, and the fate of the sovereign Person in that kingdom, our Lord Jesus Christ. All moves forward into the eternal beatitude in the heart of God. There all is ordered in perfect truth and in perfect love and in perfect fellowship.

How can we picture Paul's great thought? We can say with Origen that God has many finite worlds, that all finite worlds are a kind of *santa scala*, a holy stairway, a path of ascension, in the divine discipline by which God prepares his sons for his eternal glory. We may think of the process of discipline as long, hard, weighty

with solemn experience, and for many souls full of woe, and yet not endless in woe or in pain or in sin for any creature that God has made. We may figure a redemptive universe, changing its forms in the interest of righteousness, passing from one degree of perfectness to another, dissolving its discords and shedding them forever, and resolving itself at last into one eternal rhythm of rational being and love in the infinite soul of God. Whatever form imagination shall devise, Paul's central thought is the thought of order. And this order is set at last in the heart of God. The song in the whole range of its notes is all order, all truth, all light, all fire, all soul; it is the voice and utterance of the Divine Soul. This is the goal toward which Paul sees the universe tending. The consummation is the eternal song.

This passion for God of Paul the saint and of Paul the philosopher is one that Christianity must forever renew in the disciples of Jesus. Our Lord said that the pure in heart shall see God. He said that we must love God with the whole strength of our being. The vision of God and the love of God are the heart of the gospel. They give to the intellect great and increasing interest in God. We wonder and dream how God lives, and while our thought must fall infinitely short of his eternal life, we cannot deny ourselves the privilege of thinking about God.

There are three epochs in the life of God, his life before all worlds, his life in all worlds, his life after all worlds have been recalled into himself. Let us look up with awe to the Infinite life, and let us for a few moments wonder and dream about God.

1. There is the life of God before all worlds. One of the vexing and recurring questions in the early days of Christian teaching was this: What was God doing before He began to make the world? The impatient answer was that He was preparing a place of torment for those who should ask foolish questions. The question may be unanswerable; it is nevertheless legitimate. Indeed, it is inevitable. If we care for God, we must continue to wonder about his life. And there is no aspect of the Eternal life that moves us to a deeper wonder than God's life before all worlds.

We know that our lives are recent. A few years, a few decades, ago we were not. The sight of our eyes, the hearing of our ears, the imaginations of our heart, the forces of our personal soul, were then no part of this world. Our parents, our kindred, our traceable ancestors go farther back, but measured against the centuries their existence is as it were of yesterday. The nations of the world are divided into the new and the old, and of the older some carry the line of a living humanity into the dim, distant past. Even here we are

overwhelmed with the sense of recentness. The peoples in the valley of the Nile, in the valley of the Euphrates, are so recent. Their works of art, their pyramids, tombs, city walls, temples, are the ancient works of a recent race. If we say that man has been on this earth for fifty thousand years, even that is nothing. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

Preceding the advent of man in the earth were numberless forms of animal life. The teeming energy of the Creator was visible in their power and fertility. Even they are new upon the stage of existence. The earth which they claim as their playground, their battlefield, and their home is young. The planets that accompany it in its march, the moon that waits upon it like some bright and sweet attendant, the sun that gives light and life to it, and that glorifies the whole order to which it belongs, — all are of recent birth. The countless shining worlds of space, the numberless glorious contents of the stellar universe, are young when measured against the eternity that preceded all the forms of being now in existence. Thought is great. It is the magician that with a single stroke can wipe time and space clean of all worlds, as one might rub out the curious figures on a blackboard. Thought is great. It is the enchanter that can present us

in the Eternal presence when there were as yet no morning stars to sing together, when there were as yet no sons of God to shout together for joy. Back into this region of pure Deity man's intelligence takes him, back to the eternity when God was all in all, when beside Him there was nothing, beyond Him nothing; when He was the universe, when the universe was He.

How did He live in that lonely eternity? Could He be content with his own thoughts? Could He be satisfied with the dreams of the worlds that were to come into being? Could the eternal designs in his intelligence of the coming forms of the universe, like the prior and beautiful designs of some great artist, sufficiently delight his soul? Could an archetypal universe, a universe modeled in thought, forever existing in his intellect, forever blazing in beauty and splendor, forever expressing his creative purpose, holding in its vast order images of the coming multitudinous forms of created beings, meet all the demands of God's heart? Our God is love. Whom did He love? Our God's delight is the delight of the lover. And how could this lonely, Eternal God know either love or joy?

Then, too, the race that was to be, the race of man, was to be a social race. It was to consist of young men and maidens, old men and little children, lovers, husbands, wives, families, kin-

dreds, nations, a social humanity. How could this social race, this race of lovers, come out of an individual God whose best attempt at love was the love of himself?

Thus are we thrown back upon the glorious mystery for which the Trinity stands. It is a poor word. It is in no sense a Biblical word, and yet it has come to stand for the New Testament conception of God, the conception of God that saves the reality of God to mankind. It makes real the eternal love of God and his eternal joy. It tells us that God is in himself a mystic, unfathomable, social whole, that his unity is not the unity of the bare individual, but the unity of harmonious difference. It tells us that God is eternally the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that He is in himself the ineffable society, that in himself there is eternally the living whole according to which He is to make our human race, our human world.

Thinking of God not as eternally solitary, but as forever an incomprehensible society in himself, we look upon the epoch of his being before all worlds with wonder and joy. Forever in himself there are those exchanges of thought, those mutualities of love, those reciprocities of being, that are the heart of our happiest existence. We can dream over the eternal society in God before sin or weakness or woe was in the universe,

when all was light, splendor, and peace, when nowhere was there any darkness or cloud or shadow, when only the Eternal wisdom, the Eternal love, and the Eternal strength were, and were all in all.

O happy universe! O blessed Eternal Being! The finite has not been born. The finite does not exist. There is no limitation upon the Life that is all in all, there is no wrong, no cruelty, no sad struggle, no heart-break anywhere; there is no death in all the universe, no voice of weeping, as of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not; no death, no grave, no despair; nothing but the morning without clouds, the fair eternal morning, nothing but boundless vision, boundless love, boundless life and joy. O blessed universe, last forever! Break not forth from the beatitude of thy perfect and unshadowed bliss. O Eternal God, who in thyself art all in all, continue to be all in all, content forever with thy perfect Fatherhood, thy perfect Sonhood, and thy Holy Spirit. Be thou the blessed universe; let the blessed universe be thy life and thine alone.

2. The prayer is vain; there is the second epoch in the being of God, his life in all worlds. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth forth knowledge. The heavens are here, declaring the glory of God. The cosmos is here,

ordered, advancing, living, the solemn and amazing embodiment of the mind and will of God. Life is here spreading into endless varieties, climbing into new and higher forms. Man is here with his dual nature, his sense and reason, his flesh and spirit, his kinship with the animal and his affinity with God.

The second great epoch in its highest form has begun. The conscience of God seeks expression in the existence of this dual creature man. There is the birth of the ideal in the human soul. Over the personal life, over the life of the family, over lovers' communion and marriage altar, over the cradle and the school and the house of prayer, the ideals gather; over the societies of trade and the nation they assemble, with a bright, particular star for every relation, for every interest, for every vocation, with a galaxy of stars for the total social existence of man, an inward firmament ample as the outward, crowded as that is with unsetting worlds that burn forever in the heights of man's being, and that form the heights, overawe and fascinate, amaze and hallow, command and bless, the weary race of mortal men.

With the birth of the ideal there comes the beginning of moral struggle. That heavenly vision will not allow man to rest. The ideal is with man, and he can no more outrun it than he

can outrun his own shadow. It is the image, the shadow, the spirit and presence of God in the heart of our existence.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
And the light about me shall be night;
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Omnipresent is the ideal. Its light is everywhere. By it we know that error is error, that wrong is wrong, that sin is sin. We know its presence in regret and grief, in remorse and despair, in the whole descending bitterness of the selfish life, in all the circles of the moral inferno, in the utmost depth of malice and shame. By the ever-present ideal we know that we are men, and that we have outraged our humanity. By it we know the sweetness of repentance, the consolation of the new purpose, the high and solemn joy of moral manhood victorious in temptation, strong in service, undismayed in adversity, fearless in death, at peace with the universe, upheld by vast hopes in the heart of mystery. The ideal

is the glorious presence of God in the human mind. The struggle and the suffering of man in the presence of the ideal are the struggle and the suffering of man in the life of God.

What a great epoch this is! We think first of all of this awakening of a race of animals by flashing in upon the members of it an image of higher good, of better things, of mightier ranges of being, of the moral life of God. This is the first movement in the vast process. A race of animals is arrested; something has touched it from above; something from behind the skies has passed into its heart. It was a race of animals; it is now a race of men. It is a race awakened to the sovereignty of the moral order. It is a race with a conscience summoned to the vision and the service of God. It is as if we heard in the thick darkness of animalism the words ring out, "Let there be light: and there was light." The conscience of God has now a sphere of expression and operation beyond himself. He is the Creator of a morally awakened race, He is the God and Father of men.

The next thing that strikes one is the waste in this epoch. So many lives there are that look up once or twice, and then forever afterwards look down. So many souls there are that never come to anything, that waste their power in sin and shame, that follow paths of evil and disgrace

into despair, that go at last to swell the awful volume of human failure. What a dead sea is this! What a depth of waste and shame, what a charnel-house set in the light of the ideal! There in the light of the eternal ideal are exposed for recognition the sweet children that ended existence in crime, the fair youth that became the plague of society, the men and women who in their headlong career of vice abandoned all honor, the men and women of genius who lent imagination to transfigure lust and glorify the beast, and the countless company who simply became sordid and mean, and who sank at last, helpless, worthless, hopeless, into the dark embrace of death. What a multitude that is, lying in the morgue of history awaiting recognition; and there is none to recognize or pity or put them out of sight but God.

Then comes the tragedy in the life of the good. They mean well, they make mistakes, and they suffer from mistakes. They did not know the time of their visitation, and they have thus brought upon themselves enduring distress. They aim high, and the arrow falls far short of the mark. They aim again and again, and they do not attain. The pursuit of the moral goal breeds a kind of despair. Who is sufficient for these things? We fight with beasts as Paul did at Ephesus, and we carry through life the marks of

their teeth upon our nature. Everywhere our ignorance and weakness conspire to limit our attainment, sometimes to defeat our endeavor. We rise fresh every morning, salute with devout hearts the shining hours full of good, full of God, and we retire every evening weary with the consciousness that mistake has again kept us from complete and glorious victory. Paul begins his Christian life with the challenge, "Am I not an apostle?" He ends it with the confession, "I am the chief of sinners;" and he adds the great tragic note, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Oh, the tragic mistake of the good soul! Oh, the intellect, unequal servant of the good will! Oh, the poor device that defeats or limits the victory of the good intent! This is the pure tragedy of the world, — this ignorance and weakness by which our best purposes and endeavors are beaten back in defeat. The tragedy of the world is not given in the sin of Judas. That is pure crime. That is unmitigated waste and shame. The tragedy of the world is given in Peter's denial. Weakness overwhelmed him. There was no vision left, no strength to support the generous resolve, "I will go with thee to prison and to death." The man went down with love alive in his heart, with a noble purpose keeping its hold upon his will; he went down through ignorance, through weakness, through

the surprise that overwhelmed the mind unequal to the service of the noble intent. This is the tragedy of our time. The good man in temptation, in a difficult duty, in a great crisis of existence, falling from his goodness through mistake. He is the soldier on picket duty, who never means to be unfaithful, whose soul shrinks with horror at unfaithfulness, and who yet in an hour of weakness falls asleep at his post. When he is called, court-martialed, sentenced, and led forth to be shot, do not his comrades see the tragedy in his life? Do they not see how different his case is from that of the wretch who never meant to be true, who is shot because he is a wretch? Do they not feel the pity of it when they see him fall, pierced by a hundred bullets? That is part of the vision of this world, — the suffering, sometimes the fatal suffering, that comes from the ignorance and the weakness of the brave.

We stand at a distance and survey this mighty epoch of human history. If we stand too near, we shall be dismayed by the horror of the battlefield, its slaughter and its agony. If we stand where we can see it all, we shall feel that the God of battles is in it, and that the forces of his spirit are supreme. He has made man. He has made man aware of his manhood. He has made man know himself in the descent of shame, in

the inferno of the wicked life. He has made man know himself in the struggle upward, in the sense of limitation and defeat. He has made the race of man, and through the fiery courses of woe, through the heart of the world's deepest tragedy, He is greatening within man the sense of his humanity. As we survey this tremendous epoch, we cry out for our own comfort, and for the comfort of mankind: —

"O love that will not let me go." We look upon a scene, — confused, wild, tragic, tremendous, but beating high with life, pulsing with the presence of God. Our sinful, erring, suffering race is here, and God is with us, God is in us. We shall not be moved; God shall help us, and that right early. We are here in this wide and terrible desert wherein are nameless distresses, and we are the flock of God, and He is our shepherd. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil; for He is with us, He is within us.

3. There is the final epoch in the life of God. In the first epoch God was the universe; in the second the universe reaching its climax in man was other than God, while living upon his strength; in the final epoch the universe is taken back into the Eternal life, and God becomes all in all.

Here is the hope for the wasted existence on

the earth. Human history is less than an hour in the great and terrible day of the Lord. Human life with its threescore years and ten is less than a moment in the vast redemptive process of our God. The souls that have turned life here into shame are on the fiery courses of woe. None may say how long or how terrible their punishment may be. They were made for the vision and service of God; they have unmade themselves. On the potter's wheel they have gone to pieces; they are thrown to the rubbish-heap. But the clay is good, the wheel whirls forever, and the potter loves his task. The broken vessel will soften into the new lump, the old clay will be put upon the wheel again, the old eternal design will forever seek the perfect embodiment of its high beauty. Such must be our hope. Souls made in the image of God may not die; souls that have outraged their being may not enter the kingdom of God. Souls that are outside that kingdom are in the realm where God recovers the waste of our world, where He remakes the broken, worthless human life.

"I stood at Naples once, a night so dark
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all:
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze —
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,
Through her whole length of mountain visible:
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,

> And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.
> So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
> And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.
> Else I avert my face, nor follow him
> Into that sad obscure sequestered state
> Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
> He else made first in vain; which must not be."

If this is not too good to be true, if life that here has been an expense of being in a waste of shame may not forever lie as a mere rubbish-heap in God's universe, we may well believe that all the sorrowful issues of mistake and weakness shall at last be healed, that God shall abolish the tragedy of our existence by abolishing its cause. And He shall conserve the great human issues of this tragic world. All the pity for suffering souls, all the horror of the black issues of mistake, all the sympathy and tenderness, all the pure aspiration and high prayer, shall be kept forever. The wealth of soul that has been gained in this process of blood and tears shall not be lost. The tragedy shall end because ignorance and weakness shall be done away, and the great heart of the brave who fought and suffered defeat, who were caught in meshes of error that they could not rend asunder, shall beat with a heavenly joy. And the joy shall be a song in which the major notes of final victory and peace shall be set in the vast minor of remembered mistake and sorrow. Oh, that song

of Moses and the Lamb! the triumphant peal of a redeemed humanity, singing in the memory of this scene of tragedy, singing with a voice like the voice of many waters, as if all the tears and all the sorrows of all time were pouring their pathos into it. The process of tragedy is in God; its issues are with Him.

Here, too, we may see how clear the hope of the deathless life burns. God shall recall the universe into his own life; worlds shall dissolve into their elements, mere physical individuality shall pass away. All life that is without the capacity of rational being must run its brief course, but souls made in the image of the moral Deity, made for his heart, created children of God, shall last forever. They shall be recalled, like a constellation of wandering stars, into the deep bosom of the Eternal Being. They shall be recalled into the centres of the light ineffable. The dead are with God, as stars unseen at noon are in the heavens; the dead are with God, recalled to the life in Him, moving on higher courses, but covered by the light that is inaccessible. The dead are in God, concealed in light, serving in the centres of a glory into which mortal vision may not penetrate. The dead shall be with God, the small and the great, recalled to his heart, placed there as the permanent embodiments of his creative love, kept in being

that they may behold, serve, and enjoy Him forever.

Is there no comfort in this vision? If it is true that God shall again be the universe, it is true that all in God must accord with his soul. All sin, all sorrow, all weakness, shall pass away. The terrible discords of existence shall be shed forever. The vision is of the Holy City. And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat, for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Oh, that stainless, tearless universe! Oh, that universe in God! Oh, the tenderness and the strength in our God! Like the dear mother long since vanished from us, He shall take us soul by soul in our mistakes and fears and heartbreaks, and with his own hand wipe away our tears. Like the father who put his strength round us, He shall compass our being with his Almighty love. Oh, the vision of the redeemed and sorrowless race of mortal men, what sweetness, what solace it brings!

Is there here no inspiration for the soul that would be just and pure? Whence come our paralysis and despair? From doubt concerning the victory of good over evil. When we lose our

faith in our own possible nobleness, when we surrender our belief in the possible nobleness of our fellow men, when we have no longer high confidence in the power of truth over human hearts at home and abroad, then we abandon endeavor. When hope dies, endeavor ends. Doubt of the victory of good over evil is the thing, and the only thing, that cuts the nerve of moral service. This is our supreme calamity. Moral discouragement is the source of all but a small fraction of the sins of men, moral discouragement is the origin of the greater part of the indifference of good people to the claims of the kingdom of God. Take all hope of goodness out of the heart of man, and to-morrow you will find him herding with the beast of the field. The vision of God triumphant, — not that, but the horror of the devil triumphant, is the great destroyer of moral endeavor. The vision of eternal sin, defiant forever, is the supreme dismay. For, as Maurice said, we need then a new Te Deum, a chant in infinite gloom, — "We praise thee, O Devil, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."

As our hope is in God, so our inspiration is from Him. He is on the side of every soul that seeks the righteous life. And when we join Him in service for the coming of his kingdom, we trust to his power to win our cause and to reward

our labor. When we are confident that we shall not fail, how earnest we become in our personal devotion, how large and free we become in our public service, how generous and how joyous as sustainers of the great causes of mankind! When we rise to the vision of the truth that no falsehood can defeat, of the right that no wrong can crush, of the goodness that no evil can overpower, we rise to our best estate as members of the Church of Christ. Serious but not hopeless, difficult but not uncontrollable, tremendous but subject in the long eternal years to God, is the moral being of this race of ours. And we bless God that the universe has never escaped from his control. We bless God for the vision of the angel standing in the sun, the spiritual splendor in the heart of splendor, the redeemed humanity become all light, all fire, and set forever in the infinite glory of God. We bless God for the hope of a universe recalled to himself, for the dream that hears again the song of the morning stars, the shout of the sons of God, for the fitful, but solemn, expectation that again in all worlds, in all souls, in sovereign power and grace God shall be all in all.

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